Pulpit Preaching

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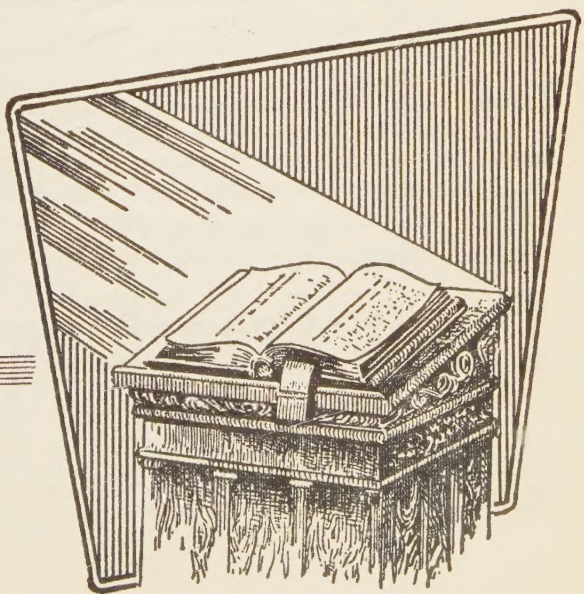

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A PROFESSIONAL JOURNAL FOR MINISTERS

Editorial Comments

This month's emphases are centered in the topics "Christian Essentials" and "Old Truths Retold." The illustrations in "Worth Quoting" were garnered by Dr. Rolland W. Schloerb, pastor of the Hyde Park Baptist Church, Chicago, from his reading in current books.

The topics of the October issue will be "A Christian and His Politics," with sermons appropriate for the election period, and "Children of the Pilgrims," including messages for Thanksgiving Sunday. The November themes will be "Advent Adventuring" and "Season of Carols."

In response to the suggestions from several readers, PULPIT PREACHING will feature seasonal emphases one month in advance. Thanksgiving Sunday sermons will, therefore, appear in October and Christmas messages in November. This will especially honor the request of our many readers in England and in other overseas areas. There are subscribers in many countries and on all continents.

Books For Pulpit Preaching

Yesterday Speaks to Today, Ivan Lee Holt (Abingdon Press, 96 pp., $1.75)

Christian Faith in Action, ed. by Foy Valentine (Broadman Press, 136 pp., $2)

Mission: U.S.A., James W. Hoffman (Friendship Press, 182 pp., $2.50)

A Treasury of the Cross, Madeleine S. Miller (Harper & Brothers, 240 pp., $3.95)

Rediscovering the Words of Faith, Charles T. Sardeson (Abingdon Press, 124 pp., $2)

The Early Church, Oscar Cullmann (Westminster Press, 217 pp., $4.50)

This Is My Faith, ed. by Stewart G. Cole (Harper & Brothers, 291 pp., $4.50)

Introducing Buddhism, Kenneth Scott Latourette (Friendship Press, 64 pp., $.60)

Dictionary of American Maxims, ed. by David Kin (Philosophical Library, 597 pp., $7.50)

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Worth Quoting

Whose Failure?

Shortly after Russia had launched its anti-religion program an American minister was talking to a young Russian student about it. "I can see," he said, "how you might want to get rid of the church in your country. For the most part, it had become corrupt and unconcerned about the people's problems. But why throw Christ out with it? Surely, you find no fault in him." The Russian student thought a minute and then replied, "He'd do —if He hadn't failed in you"—you, of course, meaning western civilization. The American minister was humbled. Finally he said, "He hasn't failed. We have failed him."

Clarence W. Cranford, *I Choose Christ*

* * * *

An Emotionally Mature Person

People are asking, "What are the marks of an emotionally mature person?" In answer to the question, Dr. O. T. Binkley, professor of Christian Ethics at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, says:

1. An emotionally mature person is a responsible person who knows how to make decisions and accept the consequences of his decisions.

2. He faces an unalterable situation in which he has a deep personal interest with poise and a minimum of conflict.

3. He is willing and able to work with people with whom there is some disagreement.

4. He accepts constructive criticism without rationalization.

5. He undertakes to do what needs to be done today without excessive regret over the past and without excessive anxiety about the future.

6. He has a reasonably objective attitude toward reality.

Sinai Bulletin

* * * *

Triumph Over Adversity

A remarkable example of what love can do for the human spirit was afforded by the

Continued on page 19

Pulpit Preaching

CHARLES L. WALLIS . . . . . EDITOR
Pastor, Keuka College Church, Keuka Park, N. Y.
CHARLES L. ALLEN . . . . . EDITOR
Pastor, Grace Methodist Church, Atlanta, Ga.

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J. WALLACE HAMILTON
DAVID A. MACLENNAN
HAROLD COOKE PHILLIPS
GEORGE M. FENNELL
GENE E. BARTLETT
NENIEN C. MCPHERSON, JR.

The Most Thrilling Thing in the World

J. WALLACE HAMILTON, Pasadena Community Church, St. Petersburg, Fla.

Scripture lesson: I Corinthians 5:1-13

One Sunday night a young man stood outside the church door, being urged by his sweetheart to attend the evening service, to go in and sit with her. After much delicate persuasion, he finally said, "All right, I'll go in this once, but remember, he better make it snappy and get it over with."

Robert Louis Stevenson went to Church one Sunday and returning home, he wrote in his dairy: "Went to Church this morning and, strange to say, I was not greatly depressed."

There appeared an advertisement in a London newspaper: "Wanted by an invalid lady ,a housekeeper and companion. Must be good Church woman, must have good references, a cheerful Christian if possible."

Wherever did we get the notion that religion is dull and that righteousness is synonymous with tameness? However did the idea grow up that religion is an opiate, a drug to put the soul asleep, take the sparkle and romance out of life? The most thrilling thing in the world is religion. We know, of course, that newspaper men say that there is no news in the man who behaves himself, and that sensationalism, the exploits of the daring, even the criminally daring, are more spicy and newsy than anything the spiritually brave can do. But we must have come a long way from the religion of the New Testament to be pushed off the front page where exciting things are happening into the editorial columns and have no news to report from our churches except some excerpts from our sermons Sunday morning. Definitely I am not one of those who believe that the romantic days of religion are all in the past; that while back in the good old days when God was alive, something was happening, but now religion is dull and tame and all the romance has gone out of it.

There is no doubt about this. Back here in the New Testament where someone described the first Christians as absurdly happy and always getting into trouble, religion was the most exciting, upsetting and thrilling movement going on in the world. Go through the Book of Acts some time and underscore the exciting words. "They were all amazed." "These men are drunk." "The whole city was in an uproar." Exciting things were happening. Today we're in a generation geared to nervous excitement. Pleasing pagans pass by the church in search of some new sensation to satisfy appetites already fed up on thrills. They shrug their shoulders and call religion tame, can't understand how we can get any excitement out of Church, even sometimes imagine that we reluctantly go through the dull business only because we are afraid or weak, or looking for "pie in the sky bye and bye." My thesis is this, that the thing they are really looking for, if they could understand themselves, is in the very thing they turn their heels upon. The real fascinating, satisfying thrill of life is wrapped up in a vital, living religion. And what happened back there in the first century can happen, yes and even in spite of the dead formalism of large areas of modern Christendom, is happening yet in the world.

The most thrilling thing in the world is the religion of Christ. In the first place, can you think of anything more thrilling than the possibility that all men can come into the experience of conversion? That's the message of the New Testament, that ordinary people like ourselves can be converted, changed, transformed, come into possession of new, invigorating, enduring life—eternal life. Christianity is the religion of redemption. No other religion is. It's the gift of Divine forgiveness to those who, sinning against God, have hurt and bruised themselves. It is the offer of another chance to those who have missed the way. It's the good news that all men can rise up out of their dead selves into newness of life and sonship with the living God. And there's nothing tame about that.

A gifted preacher of our generation preached a sermon on the subject, "No Man Need Stay the Way He Is," and the whole New Testament is a commentary on the truth of it. Open its pages and see. Here were some fishermen on the Sea of Galilee who, one day, saw and heard a remarkable Person.

He did not sound like their scribes and religious leaders. He sounded like the voice of Malachi and the prophets. Everything about Him seemed to be the sign of something beyond Him. His words were plain words. They had the call of eternity in them. As He spoke to them on the seashore, on the hillside, they felt a lump in their throats and hope coming back. He awakened in them a divine discontent with low levels of living, and by the irresistible charm of His spirit, the desire was stirred in them to get up, be something they never had been or ever dreamed of being. Here's the record. What happened to them is not theory but history. These men were changed, lifted out of their dead selves, born from above. And the whole New Testament grows right out of their attempt to tell to the world of their day what had happened to them. The New Testament did not produce them. They produced the New Testament. This mighty little Book, "The New Testament," was put together by people who were trying to tell other people about the wonderful thing that had happened to them by the touch of Christ upon their lives. They tried all sorts of metaphors to express it. It was like coming out of darkness into light, like passing from death unto life. "In Him," they said, "we have become new persons, old things have passed away, all things are become new."

Now that is conversion, and there's certainly nothing tame in it. Strange, we don't talk about it more since it's the most urgent need of every life. No man need stay the way he is. Who wants to? The world is full of schemes to change conditions, improve them, make them better. We go to lectures on how to improve our memory, and read books on how to improve our personality. We have thirty-seven different ways of advertising deoderants.

The New Testament tells us that we can all be different. No man need stay the way he is, no man. Well that's good news. It is good news for the morally unfit. Dr. T. R. Glover told of an agnostic friend of his, a professor of sociology, who believed that men could be changed without the aid of religion at all; since we were nothing but chemical animals anyway, all we need to be properly adjusted is to have our glands corrected and our complexes straightened out. To prove his point, he set to work to properly adjust an alcoholic. It required considerable adjustment for he had picked a bad one. But the professor started hopefully, got him dehydrated and fumigated, stayed with him by day, slept with him by night. He couldn't pass a pub or tavern unless someone held him tightly by the arm. Occasionally the old fellow would get away and the thing was to do all over again. One day Dr. Glover met his professor friend without his inebriated companion. "Where's your friend?" "Oh," said the professor, "I was getting on very well with the chap when a lot of rough looking fellows came along with red and blue uniforms and an atrocious brass band. They sang hymns to the blighter, got him down to pray by the big bass drum. I don't know what they did to the poor devil, but it seems that he can pass the tavern now on his own steam." That's not theory. It's the history of Christianity from the beginning, in the back streets of the world.

Remember what Paul said to the Corinthians: "Such were some of you that you are washed, cleaned up, made over." Well I thank God for the Salvation Army and what it's doing in the back streets of the world. But when we talk about conversion, we're not talking about something needed only in the back streets. No man need stay the way he is. John Wesley was no prodigal. He was a polished English gentleman, perhaps the best educated man in England. In his conversion, the Methodist Church was born. It was to a respectable ruler of Israel Jesus talked to on the roof top about his need for a new birth from above. Saul of Tarsus was no moral outcast. One day this Hebrew intellectual said, "At midday, O King, I saw a light from heaven above the brightness of the sun, and I heard a voice."

What happened to Paul is happening still. Conversion is not the experience of one man, or a fraternity of select men, but the experience of the choicest souls from the earliest days of the Church down to the present hour. There's romance in that, the great movements in history that traced back to some body's awakened soul. We could start with the men behind the churches—John Knox, John Bunyan, John Calvin, John Wesley, John Wycliffe. Or we could take the poets — John Masefield, John Milton, Tennyson, Browning. Or we could take the missionaries and the preachers who have come up, by far the most of them out of the ranks of the twice-born. Henry Ward Beecher said, "One fine spring morning, under an apple tree I lay musing, when suddenly a sense of the love of God flooded my soul like the sunlight sifting through the leaves. It has transfigured all my days and fused my faith into a glow that has not faded with the years."

When we think of conversion as some-

all we need to be saved from is our sins, thing only for the morally unfit, as though we get off the track. Conversion is a spiritual awakening in which the whole person comes alive. Most people are only half alive with more than half their powers, as William James said, unused, dormant, dead. And every person is haunted by the vision of a finer self within him that has never been released.

A young doctor followed a crowd, out of curiosity, into a meeting house in London. And as he sat near the back when he went in, a man was praying a very long-winded prayer. It seemed he would never get through. The young doctor grew impatient and was about to leave, when a big, portly man stood up and said, "While our brother is finishing his prayer, let us sing a hymn." The portly man was Dwight L. Moody, and he captured that young doctor, and Labrador will never be the same again because Sir Wilfred Grenfell came to life through the touch of Christ.

I should not dare to put my own testimony along side of that for I claim no kinship with the saints at all. But when I hear people talk about the saving power of Christ, I know what they are talking about for that is what happened to me. A little room in the back of the auditorium where they were singing,

I've wandered far away from God,
Now I'm coming home;
The paths of sin too long I've trod,
Now I'm coming home.

And there I, an ignorant, awkward boy from the country, came into an experience which was for me the starting of a life experience beyond my most fantastic dreams.

And I am thinking of what could happen to you. There has come someone who is discouraged, half alive, wondering if there is any use at all, confused and perplexed, the sea so big — your little boat so small. Oh, believe it, you could feel the strong hand of the redeeming Christ get under your life and make the whole world new for you. I know of no more romantic thing in the world than this Gospel of another chance, this good news that all men can be converted, lifted into newness of life.

In the second place, can you think of anything more thrilling than that ordinary people like ourselves can be lifted up into partnership with the creative purposes of God? Conversion doesn't get us away from life. It gets us into it. Someone said, I think it was Dr. Jefferson who said it first, that there are two kinds of great people in the world, those who were born great — like Edison, people who would be great under any circumstances because they're born with inherent genius. There are others, however, less naturally endowed — like Lincoln, people who find greatness in another way. They see some great cause, some creative work needing to be done. They identify themselves with that cause and thus, while they themselves are quite ordinary, even significant, they become great in the cause they stand for. By linking themselves with greatness they are lifted into greatness.

With that in mind, look at these fishermen again. They were not great men, not a genius or a scholar among them. Caught up from the hum-drum of monotonous, meaningless existence, dabbling in little plans and schemes; by identifying themselves with the Christian movement, they were lifted into heights of greatness which is still the supreme romance of history.

We get a bit tired of the superior pose of certain socialites and certain intellectuals who shrug their shoulders and call religion tame. Their judgment isn't honest. We are not Christians just to dodge hell and skip into heaven in the sweet bye and bye. We are Christians because we believe that the mightiest challenge of life is to stand in our generation as others have stood in theirs, for the things, the abiding things, that Christ stands for. And don't feel sorry for us that we don't have any fun, for that is exactly what we're thinking about you. We can't understand how people, made in the image of God with all the rich possibilities of human life, can spend a whole, huge lifetime going nowhere, chasing dollars, sitting at tables drinking highballs — "dropping empty buckets into empty wells and growing old drawing nothing up" — when you could know the thrill of being caught up into cooperation with the majestic plans of God, link our little lives up with something eternal that will give dignity and significance, and even greatness to you.

How in the world do you stand it? You must find life terribly dull and tame and empty. I once heard Sir Wilfred Grenfell speak on the joy of service. In his quiet but penetrating way, he was saying what the ages have been saying, that the greatest joy of life is in creativeness, working with God to make some finer thing come. He was talking about the increasing number of people who are fed up with life for the simple reason that they have nothing

to live for, no cause to stand for; they've never found anything outside themselves upon which to fasten their affection. He said they were much like the little barnacles at the seashore. When they are born, the barnacles give promise of being free swimming animals, but very early they learn to attach themselves to the pilings, grow a hard shell on the outside, and spend the rest of their lives hanging on and kicking food into their mouths with their hind legs. Then he went on to say that all through his practice as a doctor, such people had come to him about health problems, only to invariably get around to the question, "Is life worth living?" To which he always made answer, "That depends on the liver."

Here is one way to put it. The most powerful, exciting revolution going on in this planet is this divine program of human redemption, the Magna Charta of which Jesus announced in the synagogue at Nazareth, God's eternal war against human ignorance, disease, poverty, and sin. And God has paid us the compliment of calling us to be partners in the redemption of the world. Christ comes to each of us as He came to the first disciples, saying, "Will you follow me in this? Will you take up this fight? Will you link yourself with God to make His redemptive dream come true?" You call that a tame use to make of life? You say that's dull? Rather, is it not because it calls for a surrender, an inner revolution you're not quite ready or big enough to make? It is fatally easy to talk down what we're not big enough to be.

I've watched men in church across these years, get attracted, and then as they saw what it would cost and what it meant, back off from it and sit away out on the edge and they're gone altogether. Why? Because it was too tame? Not exactly. I heard of a Scotch preacher once who stood up in his pulpit, announced his text, looked down and saw one of his officials settling down for a snooze. He stopped, and the silence was almost audible. He said, "If anybody can go to sleep while I am preaching, he is entitled to do it. It is my fault that he goes to sleep while I preach. But a brother here is taking an unfair advantage. He is going to sleep before I start. All I ask him is that we get a fair start together."

You say this is dull. Maybe you're not competent to judge. Maybe you're not giving it a fair chance. You go to sleep too soon. You never hear past the text. You don't get far enough into anything to get anything out. Do you want to find a thrill in religion? Then don't sit around on the edge of it. Put yourself into it. Go far enough into it to be caught up in its spiritual adventure.

Finally, is there anything more thrilling than the possibility that ordinary people like ourselves can rise above our circumstances and even triumph in our troubles? When we talk about trouble, everybody's listening. We all have a date with it somewhere, some time, in some form. And there is no promise that, being Christian, we shall be spared it. "Here," says Dr. Fosdick, "is the tragedy of irreligion. We're not saying that all irreligious people must be unhappy. There is much in the world that responds to much that is in them — gaities to answer their gay moods, duties to answer their esthetic moods, much in the world to make it interesting and happy. Yet for irreligious people, tragedy lies in wait, for some day life will go out into the depths, deep trouble, deep needs, and the deep will call out for a depth to answer it." What then, if there is no deep there?

I went to call on a woman who was having more trouble, it seemed to me, than any one person should ever have to face. I came away lifted in spirit by her spirit. She said, "I am learning that this trouble of mine is not merely a burden I must learn to bear but an opportunity I must learn to use." Where did she get that? There was deep answering to deep. Where did she get it? She got it from Christ, and years of fellowship with Him. Most of us, I suppose, don't know how to manage trouble. See how people try to dodge it, escape it, run away from it, drown it in the wine cup, deny it, say it isn't there, anesthetize themselves against it. Or if they are particularly brave, they say with the stoic, "I'll endure it. I'll grin and bear it." Jesus said, Use it." And in His cross he showed us how to do it, to make trouble serve a redemptive purpose.

With some friends one summer, I went down to the beautiful Wisconsin Dells, and at Kilbourn we came withing sight of that great dam which was just then nearing completion. Over that dam the waters poured with the roar of a Niagara. They were building a power house on the bank and I asked my friends what it was for. And they said the project was launched by the city of Milwaukee, that it's purpose was to supply light and heat and power for that city of half a million people. I immediately turned my mind to the analogy in life. Once that river flowed on peacefully without any dis-

turbance in its path. Far up in the mountain it was born, trickled down the mountainside without any disturbance at all. It flowed on through field and valley to become a great bounding river. On it came, laughing and singing in the sunlight, no obstacle in its path, no difficulty in its way. And then one day, men came to its banks, stood in consultation. They measured its depth, its width and its power. And then on a later day a piling was driven right down into the heart of the river, then another, then another and another, until it seemed an insurmountable obstacle arose in the pathway of the river that seemed to say to its waters, "Thou shalt not pass." But the river didn't quit, or evade, nor escape, nor deny. In its heart was a great inner adequacy. From the heights above, there came a power that would brook no defeat. It took a deep breath, heaved a mighty sigh, and buoyed up by the powerful forces from the heights, it rose up and up and up until it surmounted its obstacle and splashed over with a triumphant song of victory. And in its victory, it became a channel of service, giving light and heat and power to a teeming city.

That is a thrilling history of Christianity from the beginning. Back there at its source men, caught up above their troubles, filled with a great inner adequacy that lifted them above their circumstance, and in their victory they kindled a fire to which we still turn back to light the torches of our own faith. And here is a woman down here, taught in that tradition, trained in the school of Christ, who has learned to say: "I'm not going merely to bear this burden. I am going to use it. Somebody is going to get light and warmth and power and understanding out of my troubles."

Well if you know anything better than this, trot it out because the world needs this — power to change life from within, a creative task to link ourselves with and participate in, an inner adequacy that will help us rise above our circumstances and triumph even in our troubles.

The Christian As Servant

DAVID A. MacLENNAN, Brick Presbyterian Church, Rochester, New York

Scripture lesson: Mark 10:42-45; II Corinthians 4:5; I Corinthians 9:19, 22.

It may be my misfortune to read *Fortune* only in dentists' waiting rooms. In such places magazines must be decently aged before circulating among lay readers. Thus it came to pass that only recently did I see the September 1951 number of that impressive periodical. In it I learned that there has been a gradual disappearance of the household servant. I had assumed that it had been sudden and complete. According to the author the 1950 census shows twenty-five per cent fewer domestic employees in the United States than in 1940. Nearly half of all household help is now to be found below the Mason Dixon line. This fact may be another feature harassed housewives like about the South. The research man contributing the essay suggests that a simpler way to measure the shortage of domestic servants is to read the want ads. Here is one he vouches for as having appeared within the last year:

> "We want a Couple—excellent cook, perfect butler—who are qualified and prepared for a truly terrific lifetime opportunity! $500 per month plus generous bonus. You'll live in a sumptuous Cape Cod estate for five months, the remainder of the year in a charming home at Miami Beach. Handsome private living accommodations are provided."

The *Fortune* report concluded with this not too profound observation: "Americans don't like to be servants, and in the long run most of us will have to do without them."

Most of us would agree that on the whole this condition is salutary. The disappearance of the servant-master relationship represents a social gain. Human dignity and a democratic society require something better than the old system commonly provided. "All men are equal," ran the inscription on the workers' building in George Orwell's *1984*; "only some men are more equal than others," is not the necessary alternative to the old view.

"Americans don't like to be servants." To most citizens the term "servant" connotes servitude. Human beings rightly resent a servile status. Christianity has not always recognized this fact, nor the Gospel's insistence on racial equality. However understandable it may be in the light of his contemporaneous situation. St. Paul's admonitions to Christian slaves show his failure to express the mind of Christ on the issue. He was not the last. Howard Thurman has re-

called his grandmother's antipathy to the great Apostle. She had been born a slave. She had cared for him as a boy, and his regular chore was to do all her reading for her. She could neither read nor write. Two or three times a week he read the Bible aloud to her. Dr. Thurman was impressed by the fact that she was most particular about her choice of scripture. He might read many of the devotional Psalms, some of Isaiah, the Gospels again and again; but the Pauline epistles never. Half way through his college course he mustered courage to ask why she would not let him read any of the Pauline letters. "During the days of slavery," she said, "the master's minister would occasionally hold services for the slaves. Old man McGhee was so mean that he would not let a Negro minister preach to his slaves. Always the white minister used as text something from Paul. At least three or four times a year he used as a text, 'Slaves, be obedient to them that are your masters . . . as unto Christ.' Then he would go on to show how it was God's will that we were slaves, and how, if we were good and happy slaves, God would bless us. I promised my Maker that if I ever learned to read and if freedom every came, I would not read that part of the Bible."

Despite the Gospel and despite the implications of Paul's own statement of it, the weight of the Christian movement has been frequently on the side of the powerful against the weak and oppressed. Howard Thurman, as a Christian and as a member of one of our minority groups, is quick to see that Poul may have had his blind spot on this matter because he himself was a privileged person. He had a security conferred by his status as a Roman citizen which Jesus never knew; "If a Roman soldier pushed Jesus into a ditch, He could not appeal to Caesar; He would be just another Jew in a ditch."

Jesus our Lord knew what it was to be denied full citizenship in His nation. He knew the plight of servants. Yet it is this Man who insists that His followers must be servants, slaves, of others in a profound sense, and for the Kingdom's sake.

> "You know that those who are supposed to rule over the Gentiles lord it over them" ("supposed" is right!—who ever really submits to those whose arrogant use of power gives them external domination?) "and their great ones exercise authority over them. But it shall not be so among you; but whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all."

We applaud this sentiment. Service clubs inscribe an expression of it on their emblems. But to think about it is to be made uneasy. The implications are contrary to our success philosophy. "Americans don't like to be servants."

I don't like to be a servant. It means being at everyone's beck and call. To be a servant means a life of interruptions. How can a person stand being pushed around, unless he is content to throw his mind into neutral and go where he's pushed? Further, to be a servant event in the New Testament sense places a premium on versatility: you have to be trained, fit for a job of almost any kind anywhere. More than this, there is every chance that a servant ends up with his rights, prerogatives and personality trampled on or walked over. Who wants to be a doormat?

Yet Christ our Lord declares that greatness in the kingdom of God depends not on being top dog but on being servant of all. To choose a Christian vocation is to choose the role of a servant. It may have occurred to you that the word translated minister or servant is the word from which the ecclesiastical term "deacon" is directly derived. Every Christian is a deacon; under obligation to serve others.

We would better face it. Perhaps it should be made more explicit in our ordination services. One Protestant communion in its "form and order for ordination to the holy ministry" comes near to it in the question: "Do you promise subjection to your brethren in the Lord?" An affirmative answer is expected and doubtless necessary if the organization is to function efficiently. To avoid subsequent misunderstanding and much frustration we might insert a question along this line:

"Do you promise to be the servant of Christ and the servant of all for whom He gave His life, including all difficult, demanding and unreasonable persons, as God shall give you strength?"

I for one would need much divine grace to say with a pure heart fervently, "I do so promise, the Lord being my helper."

It may be we shall escape part of the obligation if we change the metaphor, "the slave of Christ Jesus." It may be obsolete. One tells of hearing a religious thinker, it may have been in Chicago, who said that we have no longer to serve God but to cooperate with Him for His self development. To a rank amateur in theological concepts, it

sounds like irreligious solicitude for God's quest of maturity!

Like it or not we cannot soften Christ's demand nor waive this requirement of discipleship. "The true servant of God will be slave to the brethren." Do you suppose Gregory the Great was on the main line when he chose as the most distinguished title for the bishop of Rome, "the servant of the servants of God"?

One Kingdom only is Divine,
One banner triumphs still,
Its King a servant, and its sign
A giblet on a hill.

It looks as if we had better get used to being a servant if we intend to remain Christ's faithful followers. We may be serving a long time. In heaven, says the seer of Patmos, "they serve Him day and night within His temple." A friend relates a dream. In it he saw himself waiting his turn at the celestial admissions office. A bustling executive elbowed his way past him and confronted St. Peter with a request for a position. "What would you like to be?" asked the director of heavenly field work. The former tycoon gulped. No one had prepared him for such a question. He recalled a hymn he had sung as a child in Sunday School. "I want to be an angel, and with the angels stand." Peter smiled disarmingly as in the manner of an expert personnel man, he asked, "What experience have you had?"

Three Men on a Journey

HAROLD COOKE PHILLIPS, First Baptist Church, Cleveland, Ohio

The journey these men took is a familiar one, and the travelers themselves are quite well-known to us. They were journeying, these three men, from Jerusalem to Jericho. One was a priest, one a Levite, and the third a Samaritan — a "good Samaritan," is the traditional designation.

The road was an oft-traveled one, and quite dangerous. Bandits, though not equipped with firearms in those days, made the going hazardous. In the parable the Master describes a man lying by the roadside "wounded" and "half dead," a victim of the robbers. And these three men on a journey had to pass the wounded man. There was no way of avoiding him — he was lying there as plain as day. Jesus with unerring insight describes the three different attitudes represented by these three men, the priest, the Levite, and the Samaritan. And these might well be regarded as three differing attitudes a church might assume towards the needs of its community.

But first I think we should say a word about the wounded man. Who was he? He is unnamed. Jesus calls him "a certain man." He could be any man. He could be a German prisoner living in the hell of a Russian slave labor camp, or a Russian suspected of disloyalty and about to be liquidated by the Communists. He could be an American languishing in a prison in Red China. He could be "the pathetic drunkard robbed and slaughtered by a materialistic economic system which holds liquor profits higher than the human soul." He could be a starving child anywhere in the world. He could be the unwanted negro in America, living in an atmosphere of social prejudice and injustice and having his house destroyed by bombs. Indeed, he need not be an individual; he could be a symbol of the city's or community's need.

He could be — ah, what could he not be? The Jericho road is seldom without its victim. And these three men, the priest, the Levite, and the Samaritan, still journey down that road. They may represent the attitudes not only of churches but of individuals also.

The first attitude is that represented by the priest. The parable says, "And when he saw him, he passed by on the other side." He had apparently been walking on the side of the road where the wounded man lay, but when he saw him he moved to the other side, looked straight ahead and kept on going. He did not stop. We might say that the priest saw but did not see. He knew there was a wounded man there all right, but he just gave him a fleeting glance — never stopped at all.

Why did he not stop? Maybe he felt it was beneath his dignity to do so. After all he was a priest, you know, and that was a position which had a long tradition behind it. He was definitely one of the privileged people of his age. He belonged to a respected and respectable class. This wounded, half dead man he had never before seen and probably never would again. Why should he become involved?

In one of his books Voltaire described an incident which well illustrates this attitude. Some murders had occurred in Constantinople. Three visitors to the city found an old

Turkish farmer sitting in a bower of orange trees in surburbia, just outside the city limits. They asked him to tell them what had happened. "I do not know," replied the old man, "I am entirely ignorant of the occurrence you mention . . . I never inquire what is going on in Constantinople; I content myself with sending there for sale the produce of the garden I cultivate." That is the attitude of many of us. We never inquire what is going on in the city. We do not know. We will use Constantinople as a market for our fruit but have no desire to be of service to it. Our interest in the city is just self-interest. It provides us a market for our fruit. The city holds no further interest for us. We move over to the other side of the road, look straight ahead, and go on.

Or again, perhaps the priest may have acted thus because he did not like to face unpleasant facts. Had it been a group of merrymakers picnicking on the roadside, he probably would have gone over and chatted with them. But this was a man wounded and half dead. He did not want to face that ugly fact.

The attitude of the priest, needless to say, is one we must avoid. He was obviously quite indifferent to the whole affair. Somehow this ugly situation was none of his business. Could he have been saying to himself something like this: "After all I am in no way responsible for this crime. I am a good, decent citizen. More than that, I am a religious man. My whole life is dedicated to the work of God. If everybody lived as I do or did what I advise, there would be no wounded men on the roadside. Men would all be kind to each other. This ugly situation just proves that my religion is right. It would spare society these ugly evils. When will people come to their senses and realize that?"

There is always a danger for the religious individual to be right in theory and wrong in fact. His religious profession or beliefs then become a cloak of protection, a mark of his pretended immunity from the cruelties or injustices of life, rather than the sword of the spirit with which he wages war against life's evils. The priest, the religious person, who is so preoccupied with religious thoughts or churchly matters that he does not stop to look is overlooking the chief business of religion. So Jesus taught.

Consider now the second attitude as represented by the Levite. The King James version, which I prefer here, says in describing the Levite, "And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side."

The Levite stopped. He came and looked on him. And that is all to the good. Presumably he got the facts about the wounded man, and that is essential. He is the "scientific investigator," the "social diagnostician," the "moral analyst." He gets the facts. He could have told you what sort of weapon the robber used, how the blow was inflicted, where it was struck, how deep the wound, and what the chances were of the man's recovery. There is little doubt, too, that the Levite knew the social conditions that made it dangerous for travelers on the Jericho road.

Now all this knowledge is essential, indispensable. Yet the fact is that all this valuable information seems not to have affected the wounded man in the slightest. The wounded man, despite the Levite's study, was left lying there by the roadside no better or no worse for the information that the Levite might have gained when he came and looked at him. The man to him was an interesting subject for study. He was a condition to be observed. The organs employed in this investigation were his eyes and his mind. He felt under no obligation to use his heart or his hand. He was concerned about a condition, a situation; he was not concerned about a person. So he put the information, the facts he had gained, in his pocket and passed on to the next case study. But his knowledge of the situation in no way changed the situation — the wounded man was still there on the roadside.

On a visit some years ago to Berea College, Kentucky, I saw a strange looking old mountaineer. Seldom have I seen a man so unkempt and ragged. He had strange looking bundles hanging from his shoulder. He was a picture as we might say. A Levite in the company ran for her camera. "I must get a picture of that funny looking old man," she said, and click went the shutter. And the only reason I did not run for mine was that I had no camera then! This is a camera age. It is no accident that some of our most popular magazines are picture magazines. It is an age that is bent on "delineating exteriors" rather than in getting down beneath the surface and so changing the circumstances. Even our literatrue does not escape this. Someone has said it may be described by the phrase, "Take along a kodak."

But if that is as far as we go, taking pic-

tures of conditions, whether those pictures appear as photographs in a magazine or as statistical charts presented by those who have made case studies, I say, if that is as far as we go, valuable though the distance we have traveled, we have not gone far enough.

I think we are in danger of falling into the Levite's trap. It is the danger of getting valuable information and then assuming that because we know the facts we have changed the situation. Churches have often been guilty of this. Time and again churches have made studies of community needs or problems, and time and time again such studies have been approved by the churches, and time and again they have been carefully filed away and nothing has been done about them. We sort of feel that because we have looked at the wounded man, used our eyes and our minds, we have altered the situation.

When our denominational conventions meet a Resolutions Committee is appointed. And the committee brings in quite admirable resolutions about social, economic, political and civic matters. Now we are not saying that no attempt is ever made to do something about these resolutions. We are only saying that the hundreds of delegates who vote enthusiastically for such resolutions may actually feel that they have accomplished something of great significance, that they have thereby changed the conditions which they deplore.

This danger is all the greater for our age because we are a scientific age, and getting the facts is the temper of our time. We see what astonishing progress is made in the field of science because of its emphasis on inquiry, investigation. What we forget is that the scientist obtains these amazing results not just because he gets the facts, but because after he obtains them he does not file them away but acts upon them. The University of Chicago, like other universities, no doubt, used to send its classes in sociology down into the red light districts to study prostitution as a social phenomenon. It was not its business to change the conditions. Its purpose was study them. The church cannot take that attitude. We are not sociologists interested only in social conditions. We are Christians concerned about people caught in such conditions, which we want to change because people are caught in them.

This leads us then to say something about the third traveler, the Good Samaritan. He did not, like the priest, pass by without even looking. He did not, like the Levite, just stop, look, get the facts, and pass on, leaving the man as he found him. We read, "But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was; and when he saw him, he had compassion on him, and went to him, and bound up his wounds, . . . and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him."

Moses looked, and the children of Israel started for the promised land. Abraham Lincoln looked, and the neck of the slave trade was broken. This was because they did more than look. Such men were not interested just in situations but in persons. The Samaritan, therefore, used not only his eyes and his mind. He was not content simply to see a situation and understand it. He used also his heart and his hands. "He had compassion on him . . . and bound up his wounds, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn." Because of him the situation was changed!

Sometimes we are so impressed with what the Samaritan did that we may lose sight of the motive that led him to do it. But the motive is quite important. This is where we often fall short. He did it because he was "moved with compassion." There was a personal relationship here. The love of his heart prompted the service of his hand. Due to the complexities of modern life this personal relationship is often lost. Even our acts of kindness tend to become impersonal. We give to the Community Fund. We know our gift will help people but it tends to become a cold, impersonal gesture, since we shall probably never even see the people we help.

Herein I think lies one peculiar contribution of the church to our social problems. We do need to be quite objective, maybe even coldly so, in our study of the social problems and conditions of our community or city. We must make, if you please, a "scientific approach" to our problems. Well-meaning sentimentalism is not an adequate technique for the complexities of modern life. It may do more harm than good. And yet the church is here to remind us that ultimately we are dealing not with problems or even needs in the abstract, but with people, and that compassion is often the best solvent, the most effective medicine. It is more often than not true that it is the vast impersonality of the situations in which people are involved that makes their situations so unbearable. Tolstoi met a beggar on the street one day who asked him for money. The great man said, "Brother, I am sorry. I have no money

with me." To which the beggar replied, "You have given me the greatest of gifts. You have called me brother."

It is this sense of compassion for man that the church must keep alive. Sending a check, whether it be to a church we seldom attend, or to some charitable agency, is quite important. But it cannot be made a substitute for the personal, friendly, warm-hearted interest in our fellow human beings who often need understanding and love as much, if not more, than they do the physical necessities of life.

Three men, then, were on a journey. One saw nothing—he did not stop. The second stopped. He saw, studied the situation, got the facts about it. But he was interested in a problem, not a person. He left the man as he was. The Master is saying that neither of these attitudes befit his church. It is through intelligent, informed *action,* motivated by *compassion,* that healing is made possible.

He ends the parable with these words: "Go, and do thou likewise."

The Meaning of Faith

GEORGE M. FENNELL, Methodist Church, Richhill, Co. Armagh, N. Ireland

Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.
—Hebrews 11:1.

THE MEANING OF FAITH

Faith is a much abused and misunderstood word. Some people think that it is the same thing as credulity or belief in superstition. Others think it is opposed to reason, that its belief without proof, and, therefore, is non-sensical a leap in the dark. But Christian faith is neither credulity nor nonsense. It may be the opposite of sight, but it certainly is not the opposite of reason. Christian faith is a reasonable faith. It does not shackle the mind. Faith thinks. Faith has substance. Faith is evidence. "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." Let me illustrate this.

FAITH AND SCIENCE

Consider first the realm of science. You may say: "Surely, if there is a field of human activity where faith is ruled out, and where reason is supreme, it is the field of science." But the experience of scientists denies such a conclusion. The truth is that every scientific invention was a discovery, an act of faith. Lord Kelvin, the great scientist, once told a minister of the Gospel that all his discoveries were acts of faith. All he did was to piece together available evidence. In his laboratory he experimented with various combinations of chemical substances according to the known facts, and to await results. Then suddenly or unexpectedly some new substance or fact was discovered, and some new blessing was bestowed upon mankind. "All my discoveries were like that. They were the result of faith."

Astronomers, too, have found it the same. One of the planets was discovered by faith. For several years two astronomers, one English and the other French, worked independently and unknown to each other, upon the same part of the heavens. They made their mathematical calculations, and then *believed* that some great heavenly body would appear. They did not *see* it, but they *believed* it was there. Then one night a powerful telescope was trained on the spot and the planet was discovered; it was seen. Faith was again demonstrated to be the evidence of things not seen.

In the same way Columbus discovered America. He had the faith to sail westward. He went out, like Abraham, not knowing whither he went. Those who sailed with him did not share his scientific faith and they nearly wrecked his venture by their unbelief and fear. But his faith prevailed and the West Indies and America were found. Faith was the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

ADVENTURE OF FAITH

If faith, therefore, is a reasonable thing, a reliable guide, in the realm of scientific research, surely it can be depended upon in the sphere of religious belief and experience. The writer of the Epistle of the Hebrews certainly thought so, and gives us no less than twenty-three illustrations of it in his famous gallery of the heroes of faith in the eleventh chapter. The outstanding example, of course, is Abraham. The original belief of mankind was in one God, but the world drifted quickly from Monotheism to Polytheism, so that in Abraham's country, Ur of the Caldees, the prevailing worship

was of many gods, as is borne out by the testimony of archeologists who have excavated Ur. But Abraham was a thinker. He was not satisfied with the creed and worship of his people. Somehow, possibly by search and revelation, he came to believe in only God, and he gave himself and his household completely to Him. Perhaps he was persecuted for his new faith and driven from his home. All that the Scriptures tell us is that at the call of God he went out, not knowing where he was going. It was a venture of faith. He believed that he was being sent out by God to receive a country and to found a nation by which the earth was to be greatly blessed. If we did not know the sequel we might be tempted to say: "How absurd! What madness!" It certainly looked like that at the beginning.

FAITH IN GOD

Every great venture of faith is like that in its inception — Livingstone's venture of faith in Africa, Hudson Taylor's venture of faith in China, Mary Slessor's venture of faith in the heart of cannibalism, William Booth's venture of faith in the city, Wesley's venture of faith for the salvation of England, Abraham Lincoln's venture of faith for emancipation. But these all knew God. They had faith in His will and purpose for them, and for those for whom they labored. They believed in God's providential care, and His abounding love and concern for the welfare of all His creatures. They could not see the end from the beginning in any physical sense. They only saw the eye of of the soul, which is faith. Thus it was that Abraham went out. It was not a forlorn hope. It was a triumphant venture of faith.

It is to such a venture of faith that God in Christ calls you. He has some great task for you to do. You may feel impotent in yourself, but there is available for all the resources of His Spirit. If you have faith in Christ and in the cause He has committed into your hands, the impossible will become the possible. "All things are possible to him that believeth." If you trust Him implicitly and follow His leading with dauntless obedience there will be no limit to what He can accomplish through you. "I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me."

A lecturer in science in a great university used to move his lips just before beginning a lecture. Some of his students thought it was a nervous action. Others thought he was muttering the first words of his lecture. But when he was upon his death bed some of his friends saw his lips move in the usual characteristic fashion and bent over to hear what he was saying. They heard him faintly saying: "You lead, Lord, I'll follow." So his secret was at last discovered. It was a prayer which he offered to his Lord before every lecture, and which he offered again in death. His reliance for life and death was in Christ.

Let us, too, make his words our confession of faith: "You lead, Lord, I'll follow."

Oh, lead me Lord, that I may lead
The wandering and the wavering feet;
Oh, feed me, Lord, that I may feed
Thy hungering ones with manna sweet.

Facing Life Unafraid

GENE E. BARTLETT, First Baptist Church, Los Angeles, California

The Christian faith is an old hand at grappling with fear. There is a timeless summary of that good news in words which Jesus spoke one day to a leader of the synagogue who had sought Him out with a special request. The request itself has heartbreak in it. His little daughter lay at home at the point of death, and he asked Jesus to come. Even while they were on the way, they were met by others who brought word that the little girl was dead. It was Jesus who spoke first. He said to the grieving father, "Do not fear, only believe."

Everyone who has tried it knows that it simply isn't enough to say, "Do not fear." The only way to handle it is by adding the latter part, "Only believe." For belief is the light along the way, the weapon in the time of battle, the foundation in the days when the storms of fear descend. What does it mean to throw the weight of a great Christian belief into the struggle to face life unfraid?

First of all, you begin by believing that God can make even our fear to be useful. To some this may be disappointing. You hoped that the promise of the Christian faith was complete release from the struggle. But there is little, indeed, to support this hope either in its possibility or its wisdom. The Christian answer to fear isn't the promise of a sufficiency in meeting it. It is the hope of turning fear to constructive rather than destructive ends in one's life.

After all, in those moments when we are free enough from the fever of fear to think soberly, we, surely, can see that life without any fear is neither desirable or possible. So, it is that a parent while seeking always to alleviate the unnecessary fears of a child strives at the same time to give protective fear which the child may not have. Why the caution about crossing a street? Why the reminder of rules that keep the safety of the child in the water? This is fear given for protection. It is a fear proportionate to the reality of the danger.

FEAR CAN BE USEFUL

In "Moby Dick" Starbuck, the mate on the whaling vessel, makes clear that when he is selecting the men for his boat, he takes this very fact into account. "I will have no man in my boat," said Starbuck, "who is not afraid of a whale." In explanation, the author concludes, "An utterly fearless man is a far more dangerous companion than a coward." If the wisdom of man can see this, how much more the wisdom of God! Fear is not an enemy except when it becomes the ruler and not the servant of your life. Fear can be a teacher, a protector, a guard when dealing with perils and dangers that are equally real.

There are alternative ways by which modern men try to handle fear. Belief is not the only road open to us. Many modern people try to meet the matter by denying that fear is real. The paper is full of invitations to cults and sects that promise this kind of solution. I am often reminded of the wisdom of the little boy, afraid to cross a field where there was a vicious goat, who was counseled to go without fear, since pain and suffering are not real. "You know that don't you?" asked his mother, "Yes, I know it," said the boy, "but what I wonder is, does the goat know it?"

Or again, some meet the problem today by running away from it. We have all kinds of ways to keep ourselves insensitive to the fact of fear. Most of us would easily recognize in the consumption of alcohol the attempt to blot out the reality of fear or the unpleasant facts which often make of life a living hell upon earth. I can remember men who frankly told me that alcohol was the quickest way out of Korea, and who turned to it as the easiest means of escaping. But it isn't only alcohol or sex or the frantic pursuit of pleasure which are escapes; sometimes we use work or even the pursuit of virtue as the way of keeping from coming at last face to face with something we fear.

ESCAPE OR BELIEVE?

Against these modern alternatives of denial or escape, there is still that Christian alternative, "Only believe." Does that mean that by your belief you will be free from any encounter with fear? No, it doesn't. At least in the experience of the great believers it has not been so. Rather, it is the way by which you can at last face the fear, believing that God has something in it which you can learn, believing that beyond the fear and around it there is a faith that keeps it in its proper perspective.

After all, what grounds have we to suppose that we were meant to be free entirely from the struggle with fear? Shall we ask to resign from all the rest of God's creation? Everywhere else life moves by struggle and tension. In nature there is both the power of evaporation and the power of gravitation. They seem to work against each other. But God has a place for them both in His scheme of things.

In agriculture there is both the wondrous fertility of the earth which brings forth fine fruit, but only at the cost of resisting the blight and destruction against which the farmer must struggle. In any city there is a constant conflict between the order of law, on the one hand, and the chaos of crime, on the other. In any society there is unremitting tension between progress an dreaction; the issue is always there as to whether we move forward or backward. In any character there is a constant tension between selfishness and unselfishness; not even the greatest saint is free from that struggle. In our relationship with God there are times of closeness and times of remoteness. If this is the order of things everywhere, why are we surprised that God has left us in the constant tension between fear and faith? Out of the tension we grow in our understanding and our wisdom?

"Do not fear, only believe," that God can use fear for our growth and guidance.

Again, this belief which is the answer to fear means the confidence that a change of circumstance does not mean a change of security. Is there really any other way of finding sufficiency and tranquility than looking beyond circumstance to your own inner life? There is a revealing truth in the comment about the character Gerald O'Hara in "Gone with the Wind." At his funeral it was said of him, "There warn't nothing that come to him from the outside that could lick him. But he had our failin's too, cause he could be licked from the inside. I mean

to say what the whole world couldn't do his own heart could." But that's the negative side of stating it. Paul stated it in words that sound like an anthem, "I am persuaded that neither death nor life can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." There lies the only security which is open to us in our struggle with fear.

GROWING IN FAITH

It is impossible to over-estimate how that faith enables you to face life unafraid. John Wesley demonstrated that on many an occasion when he was faced with fearful opposition and even violence. One evening in a coal town in England a mob, gathering around the house where he was staying, called for him to come out. Wesley went out and faced the crowd. They insisted upon taking him to the magistrate, and Wesley said, "That I will with all my heart." As they went down the street the mob gave vent to all of the anger born of misunderstanding. They tore off some of his clothes and struck him on the face. At last Wesley stopped and raised his voice, "What evil have I done? Which of you have I wronged in thought or word or deed?" Then in the midst of the crowd he began to pray. An amazing change came. The leader of the mob was a prize fighter, known for his love of violence. Suddenly in the midst of the prayer he said, "Sir, I'll spend my life for you. Follow me and no one here will touch a hair of your head." Others stepped up to join him, some of them among the roughest in the mob. So, Wesley, ragged and beaten, but with his face shining, went back to the house under the escort of the very group who had been his enemies.

What a graphic confirmation of the words of Jesus, "Do not fear, only believe!"

It will not come in a day or a month or a year or completely in a lifetime. But it will grow. Every day you will need to affirm it again and again. It means learning to meet God in the morning when the day is at its best. It means coming to the last moments saying with the Psalmist, "In peace I will both lie down and sleep for Thou alone, O Lord, makest me to dwell in safety." It means asking the very grace of God to teach you to look out and not in, forward and not back, up and not down. It means that by the sheer gift of God's grace, accepted day by day, you can learn to face life unafraid.

Life, An Eternal Struggle

NENIEN C. McPHERSON, JR., Fourth Avenue Methodist Church, Louisville, Ky.

Scripture lesson: Romans 5:1-5

Inez Robb, in her syndicated column, points to a possible solution to the perplexities of this world. The title of her column is significant: "The Russian Nuisance May Be What We Need." She illustrates her point by a story told by Professor Toynbee, one of the greatest living historians. He thinks we will solve our difficulties short of a "shooting war." He sees the Russians as an irritant needed by us in order to improve ourselves and to work for the improvement of conditions in the world so that a more satisfactory basis for peace can be found. Professor Toynhee's story is about the English North Sea fishermen who got out for several weeks in their fishing trawlers, fishing for the herring. They have tanks of water on board the trawlers in which they put the fish in order to keep them alive and in as good condition as possible. They discovered, however, that most of the herring come into port rather flabby. One captain had learned a secret that the others had not discovered; and for some reason (and he guarded his secret well), his fish were very lively and almost as if they had just been pulled out of the ocean. Finally, he revealed his secret to a friend. For every thousand herring that he put in the tank on board the trawler, he put in several big catfish to chase the herring. While they always ate a few of the herring, they kept the rest of them in such a lively condition that they were just as fresh as when they had been caught.

The moral is quite plain. We have been under an illusion long enough. Peace in the world is not one of those things we can work for or fight for and hope to win and sit down and enjoy forever. Peace is one of those values we must work for all the days of our lives. We are not likely to find the time to come during our lifetime when we can be so sure of the peace of the world that we can sit back and take life easy. Most of the human relationships that give us cause for worry in the world are of the sort that can never be permanently adjusted except as we remain diligently on the job working to improve ourselves and to make our democratic way of life more attractive than any other

by the way it works for people.

Perhaps, the greatest danger to us as a people in the present hour is this: that we may rest back on the fact that we have the atom bomb and great military strength and great potential fighting power and depend on our military strength alone to protect us and to insure peace in the world. I would not suggest that we do away with our military strength (although much of it is antiquated and useless), but I am saying that no amount of military strength and no stock pile of atom bombs, no matter how large, can possibly protect us unless we do something more. In the last analysis the only real safety for a democracy is to be healthy, to see that democracy functions for all the people of the land in the way that it should and then, as Professor Toynbee suggests, the "catfish" may decide that the "herring" has discovered a better way of life and may even be converted to the democratic point of view.

I

"Struggle makes for strength,
And the deep joy of achievement."

Dr. Henry Hitt Crane said a few years ago: "Each one of us should do something every day that we do not want to do but know we should do, to strengthen our back bone and put iron in our soul."

We can become flabby like the herring that had no catfish to chase them if we take the easy road. And we are constantly tempted to take the easy road, to be overcome with inertia, to be satisfied with things as they are because we are among the favored people, to rest back contentedly and do the things we want to do, until we become so flabby that we cannot stand up under the tests that are surely to come to us as individuals.

Paul, in this rather autobiographical section of his letter to the Church in Rome had this in mind: "Let us rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character." (5:3-4). And the only safety for an individual, as for a nation, is that he shall have character and integrity to enable him to stand firm in the days of testing, having learned to discipline himself in such a fashion that none of the circumstances of life can ever defeat him, for his strength is drawn from inner resources that are beyond anything that external circumstances can ever do to destroy him.

Life is difficult at best. For everyone of us, under the most favorable conditions, life is an eternal struggle. But let us not sit down and cry about it; let us thank God that it is true, that life is not too easy for us and that life is an eternal struggle. For it is our only hope. Keats was right in describing this world as "the vale of soul making," and souls are not easily made. Character is not won except in terms of endurance and endurance comes from facing and not running away from the sufferings and trials and tribulations of life.

We are constantly tempted to substitute cleverness for discipline, to find ways to escape. Over-activity, sometimes, in itself is a way of escape. Some other people take the way of drink. Still others sit down and feel sorry for themselves and thus refuse the responsibilities of life. But none of these ways are good. The individual who adopts any of them will find his latter condition worse than the former.

II

It isn't the great crises or emergencies of life that really test us. Most of us can stand up under those. When a nation goes to war and has its back against the wall, all of the people discover resources they did not know they had. When a flood or an earthquake strikes, the heroic in men and women comes to the top. It is the daily routine that gets under our skin. As one of our contemporary poets, Helba Baker, has said:

I often think that anyone can face
A crisis or a crushing tragedy
With calm, exalted courage, but the place
That needs the greatest strength and energy
Is daily grind, to manage just to laugh
At all the petty hazards of each day—
To smile, whilst sifting life's wheat from its chaff,
And strive to see good along the way.

That was what the colored woman had in mind when she said: "Life is just so daily!" The problems that press along from day to day—the dull, monotonous routine of life—that's what gets us down, that's where the struggle really is; and there nothing helps except discipline and hard work, for that is the price of all real achievement in basic happiness. Very often the thing we need to do is to blow on our hands and grit our teeth.

As Cheerful Cherub says:

Although my way seems hard
I'll waste no strength in crying—
For no one ever failed
Unless he gave up trying.

You do not defeat a person who keeps on trying because he'll find another way even in defeat.

That's what Booker T. Washington, the great Negro educator, had in mind when he spoke of "the advantage of disadvantages," and he certainly had enough experience to know what "the advantage of disadvantages" would be. You remember his life story *Up From Slavery*. It is a thrilling story of a great man. Born a slave with no possible chance to get an education, he was allowed to carry the white master's books right up to the school door, but never allowed to go in. Wanting an education, appreciating what he did not have all the more because he saw what it could mean, finally hearing about a school for Negroes in Virginia, without any money, he starts on his way. He tells how he crawled under the board sidewalk in one town through which he was passing in order to sleep one night. Finally, he gets to Hampton Institute in Virginia and works his way through school. He hasn't anything to present to them except a tremendous desire for an education and a willingness to work. After all there's not much chance for any man getting an education except by a great desire for it and a willingness to work hard. Out of this "disadvantage" came his tremendous devotion to the cause of Negro education that finally brought Tuskegee Institute into being—an institution which has done so much for the people of his race.

There is an "advantage in disadvantages," for circumstances are forever testing us. We never pass the final test, certainly not until we are allowed to go "home and rest." In this life, it is an eternal struggle and circumstances are always testing us. We are growing stronger or we are becoming flabbier all the time, for how we react determines what we are and what we shall become.

"Affliction does so color one's life," said a sympathetic friend to a young woman who was a cripple from infantile paralysis. "Yes," she said, "and I propose to choose the color." You see, the choice is always with us as to how we shall react. The same "fire that destroys wood but hardens steel," and the same circumstances of life that gives one man a chance to realize the "advantage of disadvantages" becomes to another person a time of defeat. The difference is in the quality of one's inner resources, the presence or absence of self-discipline, the ability to stand up and face life, rather than run away.

III

It would be a hopeless struggle were it not for the fact that this is a "power universe." You and I should understand that better than any generation that has ever lived. We have seen the tiniest, most microscopic of objects split, releasing a power that is beyond all imagination in its strength and versatility. We live in the "Atomic Age." We ought to know what power is and we ought to discover that power is not something you generate yourself or that you can store up within yourself against a rainy day, but that it comes in from outside and is released in and through us as we use it and depend upon it.

It was suggested that under some conditions what a man needs to do is to blow on his hands and put forth all the will power he has, to tackle the job with everything that is in him, but there are some other conditions in which that is the worst thing one can do.

Psychiatrists tell us that there are some people who are ill because they are trying to do everything in their own strength by pure volition, just by exercising the will. There are many things one can't do that way. One of the greatest spiritual movements of our age is Alcoholics Anonymous, not just to free people from slavery to the drinking habit, but because it is a philosophy of life that is sound. No member of Alcoholics Anonymous will try to help an alcoholic until he has come to the point where he knows his own will power is not enough, that he can't will himself into freedom from this obsession to drink. The first two "steps" are: that a man will recognize that his life is unmanageable, that he cannot handle this particular thing himself; and that because of this he looks to a "Power" beyond himself. Not once, but day by day, he looks to a Power beyond himself for the help he needs for the next twenty-four hours. Most of us are not enslaved to this particular habit that wrecks the lives of so many people. But we also need to look to a Power beyond ourselves that can release in us (not give us to store up, but release in us) day by day power to become strong enough under the difficulties and circumstances of life to be victorious. It will work, but we cannot do it by ourselves.

We must look to a Power beyond ourselves; receptivity is the answer to our basic problem of life. Life is an eternal struggle; but it is not too much of a struggle if we will look beyond ourselves to the power that comes from the great Creative Spirit who has called us and all things into being, and who will release in and through us, if only we give him a chance, power sufficient for

any problem which we ever have to face. It is the difference between a land-locked lake that has no power and a great river running down through the gorges with tremendous power than can be controlled for a desired purpose.

The difficulty about most of us is that we turn to this Power beyond ourselves only in the great emergencies and crises of life. And then we wonder why it is that the power that others talk about does not come into our lives. The discovery of this source of power is one of those things that a man must find before the crises descend upon him. In day by day fellowship with God, Jesus found a strength that he needed for the clarification of vision and the ability to be triumphant over difficulties similar to the ones that so often defeat us. It means humble trust in the God who comes to men in Christ. It means continuous dependence day by day on a Power beyond ourselves. It means something more: a willingness to be changed on God's terms. Most of us want God to do things for us in our way. God doesn't do business that way. If we're going to get help from this source, we've got to be willing to let God take charge and change us, no matter what that does to our pet theories and our pet habits and our pet ideas. God has to have his way completely with us or he can't help. Life is an eternal struggle, but it is one in which we can be victorious if we look to a Power beyond ourselves, for there must be an intake if there is to be an outgo that enables us to be victorious over the difficulties and circumstances of life.

BOOKS FOR PULPIT PREACHING

Continued from page 2

Bishop Holt in *Yesterday Speaks to Today* Books for Pulpit Preaching—Pg. 2 col 1 considers the message of five prophets (Jonah, Micah, Habakkuk, Jeremiah, Haggai), their historical settings and conditions, and shows remarkable relationships to our own times. "The experiences of those who interpret God to us in the pages of the Bible are so strikingly similar to our own that the writers seem our contemporaries." . . . Sermons on current moral issues, contributed by fourteen Southern Baptist preachers and uniformally superior homiletically, are presented with a practical candor and conviction in *Christian Faith in Action.* Among those who show the Christian's stake in the social life of our day are J. B. Weatherspoon, Theodore F. Adams, Carlyle Marney and R. Lofton Hudson . . . *Missions U.S.A.* is a candid and competent portrait of America at mid-century and surveys "the land we love" with the clarion of a prophet and the insight of a social case worker. The author sizes up the church in action on the many fronts of the family, city, rural, labor, military and campus. This challenging, handsome book says that "somehow we who are Christians must at one and the same time 'come out from them and be separate,' and 'become all things to all men,' always remaining mindful of the hazards of emphasizing either of these Biblical suggestions at the expense of the other. In turbulent times Christians must hold the balance between one extreme that would render them a small, self-righteous, impotent minority in their environment and the other extreme that would merge them so harmoniously with secular society that they would become indistinguishable from it and the word 'Christian' would lose all meaning."

A Treasury of the Cross is particularly the story of the author's fascinating collection of crosses and of her travels and studies to find the history of the Cross in art, symbolism and life's meanings. Devotionally written, this beautiful book also includes photographs of unusual, common, quaint, fantastically adorned and historically significant crosses, as well as illustrations of Christian symbols and a little anthology of the literature of the Cross . . . The meaning of fifteen basic Christian beliefs (grace, adoption, sin, revelation, atonement, among others) are discussed in *Rediscovering the Words of Faith,* a vibrant, friendly volume which is stimulating and quoteworthy in its down-to-earth pertinence.

The Early Church is a distinguished, readable series of ten studies, written with discernment and according to the best scholarly tradition. A new appreciation of the history and theology of the primitive church is to be found in chapters dealing with "The Origin of Christmas," "The Kingship of Christ and the Church in the New Testament" and "Early Christianity and Civilization." . . . In *This Is My Faith,* twenty-five "representative" Americans affirm with a genuine sincerity their personal convictions. Each essay answers such questions as: What religious values should be emphasized today? What effect has science had on your religious beliefs? Does the concept of God serve as essential purpose for you? It is heartening and provocative to watch the manner in which great minds (Einstein, Garrison, Hocking, Heller, Montagu, Sorokin, Wieman,

et al) grapple with the values of eternal truth . . . *Introducing Buddhism* is a famous historian's interpretation of the history and teachings of Buddhism and is particularly appealing in his indication of the essential relationships of Buddhism and Christianity. Many splendid photographs enhance the interest of this highly informative booklet.

Nearly 10,000 pungent quotations, topically arranged, are found in *Dictionary of American Maxims*, a book with much fresh, sparkling and suggestive sentiments from America's great penmen. This big book will add thought and depth to many a sermon and ought to be of continuing usefulness to pastors.

WORTH QUOTING

Continued from page 2

French painter, Renoir. That modern master worked joyously at his beloved easel even though he was so crippled by rheumatism during his last two decades that he had to be carried everywhere in a chair and could not hold the paint brushes in his fingers. He would have the brushes tied to his wrist, and in this manner produced some of his most beautiful work in the years before his death at the age of 78. The power of love to triumph over all adversity perhaps never received a more awe-inspiring expression than when this heroic old man remarked to his friends that he had no right to complain, since "things might have been worse."

Smiley Blanton, *Love or Perish*

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Great Power for Little Purpose

A friend of mine returned some time ago from a visit to Las Vegas and Boulder Dam. He was commenting on the glitter of Las Vegas and what a spectacular sight it was to see all the electric signs in action in this fabulous community dedicated to gambling and entertainment. He said that he noticed the difference between Las Vegas, and the great Boulder Dam with its clean lines and its spectacular engineering skill. Then another spoke up and pointed out that the electrical power produced at Boulder Dam is sent down to Las Vegas to be used for the cheap purposes which had disgusted my friend. Maybe the lesson is that we are using great power for little purpose.

Gerald Kennedy, *God's Good News*

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Worth Something to God

Never forget that the primary and fundamental premise of the Christian faith is that your significance and your importance as a person rest upon the fact that you are worth something to God. Underneath you are "the everlasting arms." A young man on a submarine instinctively felt the eternal worth of himself when his commander warned him to keep a careful watch for enemy ships. "Don't forget" the commander said, "You're responsible for six million bucks' worth of sub—everything in it—the lives of all of us below." "Yes, sir, Captain," the boy replied, "an' then there's me, too." There's always "me," the essential value in the universe, worth more to God than submarines or the brick and mortar of cities.

Harold Blake Walker, *Power to Manage Yourself*

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On Being a Christian

To be a Christian is something that goes deeper than our ideas and confessions and deeper than our code of behavior. It means our incorporation in a stream of history and in the redemptive events which determined that stream. It means belonging to a community whose members participate in a shared drama of the past, in a revelatory history.

Amos N. Wilder, *Otherworldliness and the New Testament*

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A Growing Church

In describing the reasons for the rapid growth of the Korean Church, the following statement is made: "Clear teaching was given on the duty of every Christian to give part of his income to God. Pledge cards were used, to help church members to plan their giving and to give regularly. Many Christians, though not all, had learned to give one-tenth of their income. Much of the giving was in kind; a father might agree to set apart for the church all that was grown in one part of his field, a mother might promise to give to the church all the eggs laid on Sunday, and so on."

V. S. Azariah, *Christian Giving*

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Find God in a Desert

In my young manhood I had a critical nervous breakdown. It was the most terrifying wilderness I ever traveled through. I dreadfully wanted to commit suicide but instead I made some of the most vial discoveries of my life. My little book, *The Meaning of Prayer*, would never have been written without that breakdown. I found God in a desert. Why is it that some of life's most revealing insights come to us not from life's loveliness but from life's difficulties. As a small boy said, "Why are all the vitamins in spinach and not in ice

cream, where they ought to be?" I don't know. You will have to ask God that, but vitamins *are* in spinach and God is in every wilderness.

Harry Emerson Fosdick, *What Is Vital in Religion?*

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Understanding From the Bible

My father was a lawyer. One of his regular practices was to read through the Bible every year, and also through the collection of Shakespeare's plays. I asked him, one day, about this practice of his, and he said, "Apart from the religious strength that I get from my Bible, I also find that it is the one book which teaches me best the way in which the human mind really works. Shakespeare, too, I find a good teacher about 'man.' So that this reading of mine has served me in the practice of my profession. For what the lawyer needs to understand most is the mind of man."

Daniel T. Niles, *Reading the Bible Today*

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God's Initiative

The Jewish scholar C. Montefiore has demonstrated that, when compared with Judaism, there is only one teaching that we find in Jesus but do not find in any Jewish teaching before his time. That is the teaching that God is like a shepherd who goes out to seek the lost sheep. Jews always believed that God was a God of love and forgiveness and that, if the sinner repented, God would freely forgive him. But Jesus taught that God would nor wait for the sinner to repent; he would go out and seek the sinner to call him back.

William Hordern, *A Layman's Guide to Protestant Theology*

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Book Larnin'

It is reported that John Wesley once received a letter from a man who declared, "The Lord has directed me to write you and tell you while you know both Greek and Hebrew, he can do without book larnin.'"

Mr. Wesley replied: "Your letter received and I may say (it) . . . was superfluous, as I already know that the Lord could do without my larnin' . . . While the Lord does not direct me to tell you, yet I wish to say . . . on my own responsibility that the Lord does not need your ignorance either."

C. Ray Jordan, *Beyond Despair*

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A Walking Civil War

The Chinese word for man looks like two swords crossed, as if he were a walking civil war. As indeed he is at first - -some men more than others; and the energy spent in fighting himself is lost in the making of life.

Even Paul lived for years a divided soul. The good he wanted to do, he did not; the evil he did not want to do, he did. He was of all men the most miserable, he tells us. It took a long time to settle this inner "strike."

At long last, after many struggles, he was able to say, "Christ liveth in me." His old self was dead and buried; he was a "new creation"; his life had a new center. His life was no longer his own - -he let Christ live it.

Joseph Fort Newton, *Everyday Religion*

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Take Time For Ten Things

1. Take time to worship—it is the highway of reverence which cleanses and restores the soul.
2. Take time to work—it is the source of power.
3. Take time to think—it is the source of success.
4. Take time to read—it is the foundation of knowledge.
5. Take time to help and enjoy friends—it is the source of happiness.
6. Take time to play—it is the secret of youth.
7. Take time to love—it is the one sacrament.
8. Take time to dream—it hitches the soul to the stars.
9. Take time to laugh—it is the singing that helps with life's loads.
10. Take time to plan—it is the secret of being able to have time to take time for the first nine things.

George Frickel

E. G. HOMRIGHAUSEN
F. PHILIP RICE
R. LOFTON HUDSON
HOMER J. R. ELFORD
EDWIN A. KATTERHENRY

The Greatest Love Story

E. G. HOMRIGHAUSEN, Princeton Theological Seminary, Princeton, N. J.

Everyone likes a love story. The Bible has been called the greatest love story in the world. It is the story of the love of God for his children, and of the length and the depth to which he has gone—and still goes—to win his rebellious and forgetful children back to the Father's house. Since this is so, the book of Hosea lies pretty close to the heart of the Bible. There are more quotations and references from Hosea in the New Testament than from any other prophetic book in the Old Testament. Apart from the wonderful story of God's concern for the people of Ninevah in the prophecy of Jonah, there is no book in the Old Testament which is so much like the New Testament as this book of Hosea. One can place the parables of the lost coin, the lost sheep, and of the lost son alongside Hosea and recognize their kinship in spirit and in truth.

And while the prophecy of Hosea thunders with the judgment of God against those who reject God's love, it is also saturated with the tears of tenderness and love. George Adam Smith writes, "Where do we find anything like this save in the parables of Jesus? For the love of Hosea was as the love of that greater Galilean; however high, however low it soared, it was yet rooted in the common life below, and fed with the unfailing grace of a thousand homely sources."

I

We do not know what Hosea looked like, for photography was not known in his day. A man of such tenderness and strength, of such conviction and insight must have been an impressive figure. But even though we have never seen his face, we can get some idea of his character from his book.

In the Boston Public Library there is a frieze of the prophets by John Sargent. The artist portrays what he thinks Hosea must have looked like: a man with a fine, sensitive, ascetic face whose figure is half-shrouded by a long white mantle. There is an attractive pathos in his face, for he lived in a day of social confusion and decline. And his home life was anything but happy. Sargent has tried to get all this into his portrait. It is impossible to understand this man of God —this forthteller of God's truth—until one remembers that the "tears fall upon every page that he wrote, not the tears of sentiment, but the terrible tears of a strong man. For he was a man acquainted with grief and a man of sorrows."

Hosea married a young woman, who even on her wedding day was of a faithless and fickle turn of character. Eventually, her love went out to other men and she drifted into the life of a prostitute. Even motherhood and the tender care of a loving husband could not hold her to the life of fidelity and obedience. This experience of Hosea's is not fiction; it is fact! What would this husband do? Obedient to the voice of God within, he follows his wife, enters into her shame, bearing her guilt, and assumes her stigma. Thus, he rescues her, buys her back to himself and restores her to the dignity of his house. It took nerve to do all this. And it must have been costly in terms of pride. The neighbors must have talked. Hosea must have fought against conventionality. But love endures all things; love bears all things. Love may look foolish, but it lifts up the fallen and it unites a home and it makes life new. Hosea saw in his unhappy home life an illustration of the unhappy home life of God. Even as God loves his people, they have it within them to drift into the life of faithless and prodigal living; their love wanders to other gods and they become spiritual prostitutes. But God's love stops at nothing as it seeks out the lost. It assumes the shame; it bears the scars; it leads the prodigal home. As Hosea loved, so God loves.

Hosea was a Galilean; in fact, he is the only prophet who was a native of the northern kingdom. Amos prophesied there a short time before Hosea, but he was a stranger. Amos was a rustic tender of sheep. No doubt Hosea knew of him, had met and heard him. Amos was a rugged John the Baptist who came with a message of judgment; he delivered it sternly and went back to his sheep to wait for the axe of judgment to fall.

Hosea, however, loved his native "rocks and rills," his "woods and templed hills." His book is filled with references to the common things of daily life. He speaks of the early and latter rains, of the seasons,

the scent of the vine blossom, the bursting of the lily, the sweet aroma of Lebanon, the night winds laden with the refreshing air from the mountains. He loved his people as he loved his land. And while he was aware of the corrupt conditions of life which brought Amos to Israel, he was not content to preach the doom of his people. He saw all things against the background of God's love. He is a pleading Prophet of hope.

As the son of Beeri, he moved in cultured circles. He knew the intrigues and goings-on of the priests, the crafty negotiations of the politicians, the dangerous foreign policies of the state department. And his keen observations about life in Israel in the middle of the eighth century shows that he was steeped in humanity. Hosea was no cloistered scholar looking at the human situation from a safe distance.

Hosea was a "called" man. The Word of the Lord came to him. And it came to him in connection with the times and the home life he knew. He was a man whose message was a part of his life. No one can understand the message of Hosea without understanding the life of Hosea.

There is a passage which seems to indicate that he was persecuted for his preaching: "The prophet is a snare of a fowler in all his ways, and hated in the house of his God." (9:8) The prophet in any time cannot escape opposition. Whether he survived the fall of Samaria, the capital, we do not know. At least, he saw the Assyrian tide of tyranny approaching. The closing days of his life must have been sad indeed, as he saw the coming defeat of his nation and its enslavement and occupation by a foreign power. The traditional place of his burial is supposed to be on top of Mount Hosea, just east of the Jordan.

II

But what about the times in which he lived? Hosea lived at a turning point in the life of Israel. The nation had enjoyed great prosperity during the long reign of Jeroboam the Second. Times were good, at least on the surface of things. But prosperity produced a crisis. Luxurious living caused morality to relax and religion to become hypocritical. People lived for pleasure. The stronger virtues which make a people great went into eclipse. Amos pronounced his fierce judgments of doom against such a secular order. No wonder he was told to go home, stop disturbing the peace, and quit his treasonous talk. Hosea saw all this too, but instead of preaching ruin, he appealed the people to repent and turn to God.

Hosea also saw a number of kings succeed each other in quick succession, through assassination and inside treachery. And there was civil war between Judah and Israel.

Listen to Hosea describe conditions: No truth, no goodness, no knowledge of God are in the land. Swearing, breaking faith, killing, stealing, adulter, superstition, prostitution, drunkeness—all take away right reason and understanding from the people. One crime wave succeeds another. The result of it all is a corruption of the mind and heart (5:12). Intelligence and conscience are gradually destroyed (4:12).

Hosea is the first prophet to mention idols. Whether these idols were Canaanitish baalim or whether they were meant to portray Jehovah in crude forms, we do not know. In any case, Israel gave up its high religion and followed a lower. Such gods were like themselves; they made no high demands on men. This low conception of God produced a low conception of life. The loss of the knowledge of the true God caused minds and consciences to become depraved and degenerated. A corrupt religion makes for a corrupt people. Loose living and drunkeness take away the understanding (4:11).

Even the priests had absorbed the pagan atmosphere of the times. "Like people, like priest," Hosea writes. They were so much like people that they lost their integrity! The political officials, the kings, did not save the day; political powers provided no stability; they were infected with corruption. Hosea, who is called the first political prophet, saw that these kings did nothing to stop the wave of lawlessness; they failed to halt the disintegration of the nation. They were all as "asulterers." They were hot with a passion for power and pleasure.

But, worst of all, the political leaders were scheming with foreign powers in the hope that through foreign alliances the nation might be saved. Having lost its sense of integrity as a people of Jehovah, it now went down and down into slavery to outside forces. "Ephraim is as a silly dove" writes Hosea, for Assyria is "not able to hear you," and "he will not cure you of your wound."

It is all a rather sad and sordid picture. But it's nothing new; it's the age-old story of nations and of men. In a sense, it's happening all the time—even now! How do we get into this tail-spin and start plummeting to our destruction? How and why do we destroy ourselves for lack of knowledge? Why does our religion and our morality decline, often in times of prosperity? How can we hope for a new age when this is the situation

among us? How can we keep from reaping the whirlwind after sowing our sins so recklessly to the wind? How can we escape the day of visitation?

III

What is Hosea's message? For one thing, he is convinced that man's real trouble is due to the fact that God's people break their marriage vows with him. This is the source of man's real tragedy. It is not tragic to suffer, to lose fortune, or even physical life. Real tragedy is the loss of the sense of God. Men are like the prodigal son who broke off relations with his father. For a time all goes well, but when the resources give out he finds himself in the "far country" of slavery, famine, loneliness, and remorse.

But is there any way of renewal? Can this drift toward destruction be arrested? Yes, but only in radical self-judgment and return to the Father is there any healing of the tragic wound of life.

Man must "come to himself," confess he has made a mess of things, smite his breast in an affirmation of repentance and faith. He must reverse the direction of his drift toward ruin, take a stand and move in the opposite direction.

But of one final thing Hosea speaks in strongest terms. It is often asked, "Is there any hope?" Human nature seems so incurably bent on its own destruction. The whole drama of the Bible is set forth in Hosea. And in it three great realities stand out: (1) sin, (2) judgment, and (3) redemption. Man sins; he cuts himself off from the love of God. The inevitable result is judgment and punishment. Paradise is lost! But the judgment has in it the chastisement of a loving Father. The basic reality in all this universe is the Love of God! It is not sentimental mush, nor is it hard retribution. It is strong good will. To sin is to go against God's desire for man's well-being. God's love may be severe, but it never gives up the prodigal. Like Hosea, it will go all the way to restore a sordid wife to her rightful status and place. The love of God is wonderful, but it is a terrible reality. It is nothing to be trifled with! Is not this our hope?

At times, Hosea seemed to think that the sin of Israel was incurable, yet he "still retained his unswerving faith in the love of God." And this is as it should be. For of the love of God we can be assured; nothing can separate us from it! The love of God is constant and faithful. But how sure is the loyalty of men? The human side of that story must be written by you and by me, and by every nation, today and every day.

The Divine Encounter

F. PHILIP RICE, First Presbyterian Church, Fort Wayne, Indiana

If any one is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold, the new has come. II Corinthians 5:17.

In these words the Apostle Paul describes what happens when an individual enters into a vital union and fellowship with Christ.

A person "in Christ" is one whose personality becomes identified with Christ and who lives in him. The thinking of the person becomes similar to the mind of Christ. The will of the person is ruled by the desires of Christ. The behavior of the person is an image of the actions of Christ. The person becomes so like Him that there is a merging of their two spirits. The Spirit of Jesus encounters the spirit of the man, and, if the man allows himself to be ruled completely by the Divine Spirit, he becomes a new creation, an entirely different individual. He is not merely improved or reformed. He is remade into a Christ-like person.

If we are honest about it, we must admit that there is no one of us who has arrived at such a state of perfection. We are, however, Christ-like in varying degrees and we are less like Him at some times than others.

But all people who endeavor truly to accept Christ as Lord of their lives have certain things in common. It is these similiarities which I want to discuss.

NEW BEGINNINGS

First, a person in Christ is one who is finding new beginnings.

Only those who have experienced defeat in some activity of life know what it means to be offered a new beginning. Those who have made mistakes and who have lost both character and reputation know what it means to be offered a second chance. Those who have become morally and spiritually broken, who have felt tragedy and despair, know that life is impossible unless one can find a new hope.

What a blessing it is to be offered a fresh start. The lights of heaven would be blotted out permanently to those who close their eyes, except they be given another look. Wrong habits once formed could never be

broken, except a man be offered a new power. Those who wander from the straight and narrow road might never find it again, except they be given an opportunity to retrace their steps. We, of all creatures, are most blessed, for we find in Christ an opportunity for a new beginning.

The Scriptures are filled with examples of persons who have found new beginnings. The Apostle Paul who wrote the words of our text found himself again on the Damacus road. After the shining light of the risen Christ burst upon him, Paul gave up his old life of persecuting Christians and started life over as one of them. The disciple Peter is another example from the Bible. He found his second chance after he had denied Christ three times. In utter despair he went out and wept bitterly, but was given new courage to carry on.

Many examples could be given from life today. One is from the life of a student. This boy found it difficult to master his studies, so, losing his courage, packed his suitcases and went to the depot to take a train home. On the platform he met one of his professors who asked where he was going. The student then admitted his decision to leave school. But the professor, putting his arm around the boy's shoulder, said: "You are not going to leave school. You are coming with me to dinner, and we will hunt for the land of beginning again." They ate dinner together while the professor described the new life in Christ. Finally, the student found new courage to return to school and resume his studies, after he discovered what Christ could do to help him.

Another example is from the life of H. J. Heinz, the famous originator of the 57 varieties of foods. At a church meeting one day, the minister turned to Heinz and said: "You are a Christian man; why aren't you working at it?" Mr. Heinz returned home that night in anger, and went to bed, but could not sleep. Finally, at four o'clock in the morning he prayed that God would give him a new personality by giving him the power to live the Christian life. After that prayer he promptly fell asleep. But at the next meeting of bank presidents which he attended shortly afterwards, he turned to the man next to him and spoke to him of the Christian life. His friend looked at him in amazement and replied: "I've wondered many times why you never spoke to me about it, if you really believed in Jesus." That man became the first of 267 persons that Heinz won to the Christian faith.

In Christ we too can find a new beginning. If we feel crucified with Him, we can also live with Him. If we become despondent over the failures of the past, we can find a new hope if we are willing to avail ourselves of His assistance in starting life anew.

NEW VALUES

But not only can we find a new beginning, a person in Christ is one who is finding a new sense of values.

In accepting Christ a person continues to live in this world, but he begins to see things in a new light . . . with a Christ-like perspective. Things that formerly seemed important fade away. As his outlook changes, he discovers a whole new world which before he never considered worthwhile. Money or position lose their old attraction, while kindness, brotherhood and service become important. There results a continuous transformation of values. Even suffering and hardship which were once considered black misfortunes now become means for growth in faith.

It takes most of us a long time to discover that the things which we value most are sometimes mere illusions or are of no value after all.

The story is told of a boy who lived in a small town at the foot of a hill. At sunrise every morning the lad looked up at what apparently were golden windows in a great house that stood on the top of the hill. As he watched, he resolved that some day he would possess and make his home in that palace of gold.

The years of his childhood and young manhood passed, and, at last he accumulated great wealth. Then, in the end, he gained possession of the house. But as he looked from the hilltop at sunset he was horrified to discover that the golden windows of his palace were drab panes of glass while the humble cottage of long ago had bright golden windows as the sun shone upon them.

The greatest treasures of life are not always on distant hilltops. They can be found in the most humble cottage if our sense of values is right. Love, friendship, inner peace, a companionship with God can be found by anyone. And a person in Christ is one who has found them and treasures them for what they are.

There is a great lesson in values in a stained glass window which is in the memorial of David Livingston. On the window is an extract from a letter which was written by Livingston in his early years. The words read: "I will place no value on any thing I possess or expect to possess, except in relation to the Kingdom of God."

Whether something has any value or not depends ultimately on whether or not it has worth in the Kingdom of God. And because that Kingdom is a spiritual one, the relationship between man and God and man with man must always be more important than the things which man can possess.

The person, in Christ, is finding a new sense of values.

NEW MOTIVES

And third, a person in Christ is one who is finding new motives for living. Self-centered motives begin to be replaced by Christ-centered ones. The person desires less and less to live for himself . . . for his own interests, advantages, or success . . . and wants to live for God. He begins to want to be used by God in His work of redemption.

There is often little difference between the Christian and the non-Christian in outward action. The nonChristian may do his work, care for his family, or fulfill his civic or national duty as conscientiously as the Christian. The real difference will be in motive. The motive of the Christian is to love because Christ loves him.

And in the long-run this motive will inevitably be revealed in the spirit with which tasks are performed. It will sometimes be revealed in a moment of crises. Or, it will be seen in the things a Christian will do which a non-Christian is sometimes not willing to do. In such matters the person who is in Christ will not always follow the example of his Lord, but to strive to follow the example will be the goal and end of his existence.

It has been said that a person who is wrapped up in himself is wrapped up in a small package indeed. Not to be able to get out of oneself is misery. Real life comes when we find interests, activities and opportunities outside ourselves.

There is a touching story of a 13-year-old boy named Jimmy. His five-year-old sister Mary had an operation, and lost so much blood that it was necessary to resort to a blood transfusion. Jimmy's blood was tested and found to be of the right type. "Will you give your sister some of your blood, Jim?" the doctor asked. Jimmy set his teeth. "Yes, sir," he replied, "if she needs it." So he was prepared for the transfusion. In the midst of drawing the blood the doctor observed Jimmy growing very pale. "Are you ill?" he asked the boy. "No, sir," Jimmy replied, "but I am wondering when I'll die." "Die?" gasped the doctor. "Did you think people died when they gave their blood?" "Yes, sir," replied Jimmy. "And you were giving your life for Mary?" "Yes, sir," replied Jimmy.

We have here perhaps the best example of what it means to be in Christ. We live for Him by giving of ourselves for those for whom He died.

Temptation

R. LOFTON HUDSON, Wornall Road Baptist Church, Kansas City, Missouri

"Man is the only animal that can make a fool of itself." These are the words of Sir James Baillie.

There is a very good reason for this. It is because of man's freedom. He has choice. Several ways are open to him. He can go the high road or the low. He must choose every moment. There is struggle, defeat and victory, trial and error, failure and success that knock constantly at his door.

Eric Hoffer says, "Man staggeers through life yapped at by his reason, pulled and shoved by his appetites, whispered to by fears, beckoned by hopes."

It has become a common place of modern thinking to realize that man lives in a state of conflict. We have inner conflicts, conflicts with society, conflicts between our ideals and our wishes, conflicts with members of our family, and even conflicts with God. We have to live in the midst of a battlefield.

Nothing like this happens with animals or birds. They live in comparative peace. A dog never worries about getting to the office on time; and a bird never envies the feathers (so far as we know) of another.

But human beings have humanity, being human, saddled upon them. Whether we accept the Bible view of our humanness or not, we know ourselves to be tempted, to be tried. There are always possibilities beneath us. We may fall.

There are two great passages on temptation in the Bible: Genesis 3 and Matthew 4 (or Luke 4).

You know these two stories. Adam and Eve were told not to eat of a certain tree. Satan gave them a rationalization. They ate. Then they gave God alibis for their failure. What is God saying to us in this story?

Jesus after forty days in the wilderness,

fasting and praying and thinking, was accosted by Satan who presented him with three great temptations. First, he suggested that the stone be turned into bread. Second, he invited him to leap from the pinnacle of the temple. Third, he offered him the kingdoms of the whole earth. Each of Satan's propositions was answered by the Word of God. Jesus had the Scriptures on the tip of his tongue. All of these things were recorded for our instruction.

But these two passages are not the only two that deal with temptation. There is the story of Job, where a man was tempted because of his piety, tempted to resent and to complain against God. There is the story of Hezekiah about whom it says that "God left him to try him, that he might know what was in his heart" (2 Chronicles 32:31). Incidentally, that verse may throw some light on why we have temptations.

Then there is the Lord's prayer that has in it the clause, "Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil." And you remember when our Lord was in Gethsemane, He said to the heavy-eyed disciples, "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."

Two of the great insights into temptation are worded by Paul and James. Paul wrote to the Corinthian Christians (1 Corinthians 10:12-13): "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able ;but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." And James said: "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed" (1:13-14).

And, finally, the writer of the Hebrews gave us a very consoling verse in these words: "For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted" (2:18).

These are not all of the examples of temptations in the Bible, of course, nor all of the great verses that enlighten us on the subject, but they are the main ones.

In the light of these verses and the two great accounts of temptation, Adam and Christ, I should like to remind you of some of the facts these Scriptures present.

Man is a tempted animal. Every man is tempted. He is subject to temptation all of his waking, living hours upon this earth. He is weak and often fails. These trials reveal what is in his heart. Temptations come from Satan, from the desires of our flesh, and from our environment. All of us are subject to about the same temptations. The objects that tempt us may be different, but the response within us and the motives appealed to are the same.

Before I try to show what is at the very heart of all temptations I should like to explode some frequent errors concerning temptations.

First, temptations do not come upon us suddenly as most people think. They are not usually like a cat pouncing suddenly on a mouse, nor like a thief that sneaks into our house while we sleep, nor like a thug who leaps quickly from behind a bush to highjack us. Most often a temptation comes to us like a relative who visits us and stays so long that we finally, after days of tension, blow up and say things that we are later ashamed of. Temptations sit at our tables every meal and ride by our sides when we drive. Temptation is more like a boiler that builds up steam, and keeps on, until we use up all the pressure, and push the indicator clear out the top of the gauge. Or temptation is like hunger that gnaws at our stomachs as regularly as the clock strikes.

Second, we can never know for sure when another person is tempted and whether or not he can resist. Only God knows that. Therefore we cannot judge another person.

Many of the experiences we call temptations are compulsions, and ought to be dealt with as such. A compulsion is an irrational or illogical act that must be carried out to counteract or relieve anxiety. Actually it is very much like a temptation in that both often relieve anxiety, but there is a difference in that one is normal and grows out of conscious, intelligible needs; and the other is abnormal and grows out of unconscious drives. It is the difference between sin and sickness. Often only God knows the difference.

Again, temptation is usually thought of as negative. We are tempted to violate some "thou shalt not." But temptation involves, much more frequently, the neglect of some duty, the by-passing of a responsibility, the shunting of an opportunity.

Think of the great temptations of mankind. If you would ask the average person to name them, they would come somewhat in this order: sex, money, drink, lying, eating. These are the problems men think they

wrestle with, and they act as if these are the great battles of the human race. But are they?

Think of the greatest struggle in Jesus' life. He was in the garden of Gethsemane. What was "the cup" from which he shrank? Was it sex or money or false speaking or self-indulgence? No, it was the shrinking from the giving of his own life in extreme suffering. It was pain. It was self-giving. It was loneliness. It was heartache. These are the real foes of the self-centered life. We are tempted to avoid, not tempted to indulge. The real test is not how much we can avoid evil but how much we can give to the good.

Stevenson stated it correctly when he said that "men are not so much damned for doing wrong as for not doing right."

Our culture has done a poor job of building up positive consciences. We have taught our children not to do wrong, but we haven't taught them to do right. They are not to steal, but what do they do with their money which they make honestly? It is a sin to hate but not a sin to be cold and unfriendly. We are not to miss church but what do we do after we get there?

Take in the home for example. A husband is not to cuss or beat his children or his wife. But he can neglect to talk with them, to show affection and admiration. Many women and children had rather take a good cussing once in a while if they could receive a little appreciation along with it.

This brings me to face the fact that temptation is a constant part of my very existence. In every waking hour all my life I am tempted. It grows out of my freedom. The central fact of life is responsibility, decision, freedom. By freedom I mean that I must take responsibility for myself under God.

Freedom does not mean revolt, habit, following custom, planlessness, nor drifting. Most people are drifting like a piece of wood on a slow, lazy stream. They think that because they have good habits, automatic action, that they are good people. Their real authority is not the king or a church, but custom — that anonymous authority which is so blind. They are born a human being and they die a stockholder or a housewife or a society belle. They are not severely tempted for the simple reason that they are not individuals. Rather they are rubber stamps, carbon copies, stereotypes.

I am trying to say that the forbidden fruit is squarely in the midst of our gardens. Name any activity you wish and I can show that it revolves around a tree whose fruit is forbidden. Or sit perfectly still, or lie in your bed, and I will show (if you are awake) that decisions are involved.

When we think, play, eat, worship, talk, or work, we are faced with alternatives. When we are face to face with people or alone we must decide. Time thrusts responsibility and opportunity upon us like someone knocking at our door. Whether we like it or not, our lives are not our own, yet we must decide between good or evil. Or oftener than not we decide between the good and the best. The temptation to do nothing or the temptation to do less than God's will at the moment is God's temptation for me. I must create myself within the limits of God's garden.

So in the light of the real meaning of temptation I should like to point out three principal aspects of this tempted life of ours.

"Turn these stones into bread," said Satan to the hungry Christ. The animal needs come first in most of our lives. Not that hunger, dietary or sexual, is wrong. It just does not come first. There are legitimate means of satisfying them, and they are important, but the most important thing is that they be satisfied in the right way.

In another way, man is tempted to sink to the sub-human level. He denies responsibility. He blames the temptation on someone else. "I could not help it." His alibis may be human nature, society, his impulses, his job, his own personal quirks, or his childhood. It is a way of excusing himself. Adam said, "The woman thou gavest me." And Eve said, "The serpent beguiled me." Both of them said that they were deceived. It would have been better if they had admitted that they deceived themselves. But this is the way of man when he gets out of the human situation for which he was created.

We speak of the fall of man. He never falls to an animal level entirely. He merely falls out of the place of being a little lower than God (Ps. 8:5). He falls into a state of passivity, and renounces his responsibility. He falls away from decision. This is our real danger.

Second, temptation always involves, as an inherent part of the very act of sin, a negative response to God. It is a temptation to hate rather than to love. What do we mean by love? We mean that we make a positive response rather than a negative one, or none at all. We affirm the other person as he is, without rejecting him or turning away from him. We respect him as a person and wish to aid him in his self-fulfillment. To hate

means to move away from the other person or to hinder him in some way.

"Throw yourself down," Satan suggested to the Christ. Leap down from the top of the temple, right before the amazed multitudes. Turn religion into magic. Require that God do a miracle for you, as he has promised. It will be a short-cut to victory. At one swoop you will win their acclaim.

The tendency to leap is always with us. The way of magic makes a powerful appeal to the little child in each of us. We love to dominate others by our power, even our influence with God. That is why we make demands on God when we pray. We yearn for a miracle. We would like to solve all of our religious problems in one religious experience, a conversion. But we find that daily problems arise, and we have to find God's will the slow way. Chararter is slow. We never grow by leaping. To win the acclaim and love of people, we have to love ourselves — and this is a long road. Hate would take the short cut.

Love does not dominate. In love we seek to become the individuals God created us to be, to fulfill ourselves. And this involves the allowing of other people to become themselves.

Likewise we must affirm God as God. Since he is God, to love him means to accept him as God. Really, this means obedience on our part. Adam was disobedient. He ignored God's command not to eat of a certain tree. He prevented God from being God.

That is always true of a temptation. We are invited to fulfill ourselves (as we deceive ourselves into supposing) at the expense of another person, man or God. From God's viewpoint this is hate, not love.

Third, this leads us to a final factor in every temptation, the desire to be gods.

Satan said to Adam and Eve, "God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." Then you will not be dependent on anyone else, not even on God. You will be autonomous; you can run your own life. This seems to be the very heart of the Garden of Eden temptation. "You will be like God."

This, no doubt, sounds strange to many of us. It is hard for us to see that we want to be gods. It sounds so foolish. But look about you. People on every hand are trying to be all-powerful, to deny their dependence on God. All of us are afflicted with this urge.

I heard Dr. Harry Tiebout, a noted psychiatrist, lecture at Yale School of Alcohol Sutdies a few years ago. He pointed out that alcoholics, like everyone else, are trying to be a king or a queen. They cannot accept their limitations. To admit that they are helpless in the face of their problem, and need God's help and the help of other people, is extremely difficult.

This might be called a kind of God-complex. We are trying to pretend that we either know or can soon know all of the answers. Dr. Paul Tillich has pointed out that man's reason wrestles with three viewpoints: autonomy — self-rule; heteronomy — other-directed; or theonomy — God-revealed. Of course, all of us have to be responsible for our own lives. And others must often guide and help us. But to make God our ultimate source of help and to acknowledge our dependence on His revelation is our deepest human need.

Satan promised Jesus the kingdoms of this world if he would bow down and worship him. There you have it; you will be king or God. You will have a kingdom of your own. How often we see this as a large part of man's temptation. The boy is disrespectful towards his parents. The father has an extra girl friend. The mother builds her admirers and worshippers in the club. The daughter dangles her boy friends and prides herself in her popularity.

Wherever you see temptation, you see this urge to be independent and kingly, to be as gods. We call it trying to be a big-shot, or a prima donna. But it is at the heart of my own neglect to read the Bible and pray. It is a casual factor in my trying to get along without the leadership of God's Holy Spirit. We want religion, even, to be molded after our own ingenuity. We try to make God serve our ends, which really means that we worship ourselves. We are trying to be gods.

Otherwise, why do we rebel so against our limitations. Sickness greatly upsets us. Frustrations seem unjust. People just ought not to mistreat us. We are too divine! Service is for someone else. Why should we be asked to sacrifice?

We act like kings rather than subjects.

If it looks as if I have painted a rather extreme picture of man, of myself and others, I should like to remind you that what I am trying to say is that these are the factors that enter into every temptation. To deny that all of us "fall" away from our possibilities would be to close my eyes. Man is only half a man. He is never complete within himself. This is what God is trying to say to us. He loves us as we are and wishes to help us, but how can he unless we are

ware of our need. "Let him that thinketh e standeth take heed lest he fall."

Paul I. Wellman in his novel *The Chain,* lls of a legend about Christ, which, he ays, was circulated among the Southern Ne- roes. It is called the Fourth Temptation.

"The Three Temptations were those with hich Satan, by hunger, taunt, and pride of mbition, made a trial of his God. When Je- us proved himself supreme over these, the vil one departed from him for a time. But t the last, when Christ hung on the cross, e returned. In that moment of greatest suf- ering and despair, when the world had for- saken its Savior, and those for whom he had given his life seemed to have deserted him, the Devil whispered cunningly in his ear: 'They aren't worth it, Lord.' That was when, so the legend says, the Master raised his voice and cried: 'Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.' And Satan fled, for he knew the Powers of Darkness could never more prevail against the stain- less soul of the Son of God."

God is vitally concerned with our tempta- tions. He wants us to be, too. We are worth his love and care. But most of all he wants us to know that only as we are properly re- lated to Him, is there any hope of victory.

hree Necessities of Life

HOMER J. R. ELFORD, Trinity Methodist Church, Youngstown, Ohio

And now abideth faith, hope, love, these three, but the greatest of these is love.

If life should suddenly strip from you all ut three things, and you were free to hoose what these three things might be, hat would you choose to keep? It is my ontention that you would be wise to keep hree things which the world can neither ive nor take away. They are the things hich the Apostle Paul put at the apex of is philosophy of life -- faith, hope and love.

Some ten years ago a man by the name f Fred Raymond Gilpatric wrote an ar- icle which was published in the *Reader's Digest* under the title "The Way Back." here we read the story of a man who had o lost faith in God and in other people and n himself that he at last had to be com- mitted to a hospital for the mentally ill. His nly request was that he be left alone. For wo years he remained in a state of living leath. He refused to talk to anyone and would refuse to answer even the most sim- le question. Any effort to draw him back nto the world of reality made him tremble. But one day a new doctor asked him to per- form a simple chore of sorting stacks of ooks into three simple classifications. He was promised that he would be left absolute- y alone and would have to talk to no one. One day he spied a volume that bore a name which was familiar to him in bygone years. t was Harry Emerson Fosdick's, *The Power o See It Through.* He had once met Dr. Fos- dick when the great preacher had been vacationing in Maine. For old time's sake he thought he would see what the book had o offer. Taking it to his room he thumbed through its pages until he came to the chap- ter titled "Staying Power" and there he read: "Staying power is always associated with a certain integrity of conscience. What- ever else life may give or deny, one thing is absolutely indispensable -- that a man should not break faith with himself; that he should keep his honor bright in his own eyes."

That started the man to thinking; it fan- ned a spark of life in his heart. The rest of the story is an old one — one which tells of what always happens when a man has his faith re-born — faith in himself, faith in God and faith in other people. I take time to relate that story because I feel it pre- sents an eternal lesson, the need and the way in which we can gain strength for the living of these days. We must have faith. It is one of the great necessities of life. Jo- siah Royce said, "Faith is the soul's insight or discovery of some reality that will en- able a man to withstand anything that may happen to him in the universe." God is that reality; the God that has created you; that is ever within you; that created your friends and is ever within them. All we need to do is to trust that His power and goodness will never fail.

The second indispensable ingredient for life is hope. As a matter of fact and of ex- perience, wherever there is a vital and vi- brant faith, there will always be a pro- found hope. Faith is the mother. Hope is the daughter. Because he had great faith, Columbus could keep the lamp of hope burn- ing brightly when everyone else was ready to turn back. Because whole nations of peo- ple have had hope they have been able to carry through with the great dreams of faith which had envisioned a better civili- zation. A story has it that during the Bat-

tle of Britain someone said to a man on the streets of London, "Things look pretty bad, don't they?" The man, weary and worn from a long night watch at his post of duty, replied, "Yes, but the King says there's 'ope, sir." And it was that great hope, fostered by a profound faith, which brought the English people through. The Psalmist cried out, "Why art thou cast down, O my soul? And why art thou disquieted within me?" And then as though slapping himself into an awareness of his greatest asset he cried out, "Hope thou in God!"

The third necessary ingredient for great living is love. Love is the universal language which can open doors which even hate has slammed closed. When David Livingstone went to Africa he knew that it would require years to learn the many dialects of the people there. He also knew that white men had preceded him to that continent and left behind them ill will and suspicion, even hatred, because of their slave-trading. But Livingstone had in his heart such a love that he could not wait to learn the dialects nor could he carry sufficient arguments to persuade the chiefs that he meant only good. So he began loving those people and serving them. One who travelled in Africa shortly after Livingstone went there wrote, "In the heart of Africa, among the lakes, I have come across black men and men who remembered the only white man they had ever seen — David Livingstone; and as you cross his footsteps in that dark continent, men's faces light up as they speak of the kind doctor who passed there years ago. They could not understand him; but they felt the love that beat in his heart."

There are so many wonderful applications of this truth that one need not elaborate upon them. One may only suggest that if there are those who have been having a hard time being understood as they tried to do something really great, we might suggest that they try the method of love. When things don't go the way you really want them to, try pouring out a little more love; not the kind of love that gushes forth only until it gets what it wants and then stops, but the quality of love that suffers long and is kind. If you can't seem to get people to cooperate with you in some program which you feel is important try love. We have a good example set for us in the very life and method of Jesus. He loved, never expecting love in return, but because of his investment of love people all over the world today would gladly lay down their lives for Him. Yes, any way you care to measure its effectiveness, you will discover that love is one of the greatest of all necessities of life.

"And now abideth faith, hope, love." They are priceless ingredients for great living. Without them you can do nothing; with them you can do all things.

I Believe in the Church

EDWIN A. KATTERHENRY, The United Church, Harvard, Nebraska

I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

Matthew 16:18.

Reality, said Plato, is three fold. The first and highest stage of reality is the pure idea existing in all its perfection in the mind of God. This, says Plato, is the only pure and permanent reality. Thus, in the cause of "house," the only perfect and imperishable house exists as the pure idea in the mind of God.

The second stage or degree of reality in this case is a physical house. This is a copy, or embodiment of the idea, and so shares in mundane imperfection and is subject to the change and decay which in all around we see.

The third and lowest stage of reality would be a picture of that house. That would be a copy of a copy, an imperfect picture or copy of a prior imperfection.

It is somewhat from the viewpoint of this doctrine of ideas that I affirm: *"I Believe in the Church."* The church exists first and foremost in the mind and will of God. The church is God's idea. And God willed the church into embodiment. Hence I believe in the church as the embodied idea and will of God. But its embodiment partakes of the second degree of reality at best, and a particular church may even be a copy of a copy of a copy, even up to five or ten, in copy book fashion. A particular instance of the church may share in not only the imperfections inherent in the process of embodiment, but in addition also in the accumulated ancestral imperfections.

What matters supremely is that the church exists in the mind and will of God. Precisely *that* constitutes the church's lasting reality, its perfection, its holiness, its indestructibility. I believe that God willed, and persistently speaks, through Christ

en He said, "I will build my church." The contemporary embodiment of God's a, the visible church in its present form d organization, may be destroyed. But d saith, "I will build my church." It may have to go underground or be- me as property poor as in the days of the ostles, but, "I will build my church." Its y of professional career religionists with scramble for the chief places in the cur- nt ecclesiastical equivalent of the syna- gue of Christ's day, may one day end. t, "I will build my church." In building s church God may by-pass the ecclesias- al order and structure, even as He saw fit do on the world's first Pentecost, but, will build my church." And yet, for the urch viewed as the embodiment of God's l and purpose, for her I dare hope, in r I dare believe, for her I give my time, dents and treasure.

Her hope is not in financial wealth or en- wment, nor in the human element con- ered apart from God. In contemplating e human element in the contemporary urch visible, who of us has not cried, Help, Lord, or we perish!" But that very y, when it leads us back to the church at God thought and wills, and back to od Himself, that is the hope and salva- on of the church. When God ceases to will e church, the church is finished. She is en in the position of a city wired for power d light, but where the power house has en dismantled.

It is not impossible that the present *form* the embodied church may become a cas- lty of the atomic age, nor impossible that mmunism may continue its ruthless march ntil it leaves in smoldering ruins much of e church visible. But *God wills the church.* nother copy of the church will then find nbodiment. In that sense I believe that e church is as permanent as God's nature d also human nature. I regard the church God's response, as Divine Love's re- onse, to human sin and need. I believe at human need triggered the embodiment the church, triggered Divine Love to em- dy the church. God willed, and God wills, e church. Well may we sing:

The work is Thine, O Christ, our Lord,
The cause for which we stand.

Let us not think, therefore, that if the resent form of the church were lost, that l would be lost. So long as God wills the urch, so long it will persist in some form. Neither should our supreme concern be get something for the church, be it special privilege, establishment, state funds, or what ever. Our prayers and efforts should rather be directed to the end that the church be and become the embodiment of God's idea: *Christ's contemporary body on earth, carrying on Christ's ministry among men.* So viewed, I believe in the church, hope for the church, identify myself and my life with the church.

The church in carrying out Christ's ministry among men will be as welcome and as needed as was Christ in the home of Mary, Martha and Lazarus; as welcome as He was in the home of Zacchaeus; as welcome and needed as at the wedding at Cana in Galilee.

The church will also be as resented, as unwelcome and as unwanted, as was our Lord when He put the temple racketeers out of business; as unwelcome and resented as He was by the man to whom He said, "Beware of covetousness"; as hated and despised as He was by those who devoured widows houses and as a pretense made long prayers. There will be times when the church will be as popular as was Jesus Christ on the world's first Good Friday.

And the actors in the last weeks of Christ's ministry all continue to play their roles. They have all had re-incarnations.

Judas—nominal Christians in positions of trust, but who have sold out for gain or glory, will betray the church.

Peter — impetuous, nominal Christians bent on saving skin or face, will deny the church.

Annanias and Sapphira — members who would drop dead if confronted with the full truth about themselves, will scandalize the church.

Pilate—ungodly stooges of totalitarianism, be it military, political or economic, adherents of the satanic fallacy that matters like truth or right or wrong are only matters of viewpoints, will hand the church over to be crucified in order to save their own necks.

Thomas — intellectualists, sincere and otherwise, will doubt the church.

Demas—regarding whom some contemporary Paul will lament, "Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world," will leave the church.

Evil-doers—who love darkness better than light because their deeds are evil, will persistently avoid the church.

Blessed church! She will have her days of transfigured glory when she will be on the mountain tops with Christ, Moses and Elias. She will have her days and seasons in life's

valleys, wrestling with demons that will not come out, confronted with madmen. She will have her Gethsamenes when her soul is sorrowful unto death, when she will sweat blood, when she must choose between saving her skin or saving her soul. She will have her Good Fridays when stupidity will crucify her, when she will pray, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Her enemies will pronounce her dead, because the present copy of the church has been wrecked. But so long as God wills the church, so long will the church have its re-embodiment of God's idea and its Pentecosts.

What shall we call that Church? Shall we call it "The Holy Catholic Church" or "The One, Holy Universal Christian Church" or "The Holy Apostolic Church?" My preference is to say, "I believe in the Holy Christian Church." For, if it is the church that God wills, it is holy. If it continues Christ's ministry to man, it will be Christian. If it be both holy and Christian, it will be catholic in a deep and true measure. Its universality will be of the kind which will enable its members to say with our Lord, "Whosoever doeth the will of God is my brother, my sister and my mother."

I believe in the Holy Christian Church. For its actualization I work and pray. For its divine purpose and origin I offer no apology. This Church, which is more than the sum of its visible parts, which is not to be identified exclusively with any existing copy, regardless of name, which is not bound by tradition, which does not limit God to the size of human comprehension, which asks for neither privilege or favors, but only that she be what God wills, and that she continue Christ's ministry among men that's what I mean when I say, I believe in the Holy Christian Church!